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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

HECTOR BERLIOZ,

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,

FROM 1803 TO 1865.

COMPRISING

HIS TRAVELS IN ITALY, GERMANY, RUSSIA, AND ENGLAND.

TRANSLATED BY

RACHEL (SCOTT RUSSELL) HOLMES,
AND
ELEANOR HOLMES.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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FIRST VISIT TO GERMANY (1841–1842).

CHAPTER LII.

Brussels—Mayence—Frankfort.

LETTER I.—TO MONSIEUR A. MOREL.[1]

WELL, my dear Morel, here I am, back from my long stay in Germany, during which I gave fifteen concerts and had about fifty rehearsals. You may well believe that after such fatigue I need rest and inaction, and you are right, but you would hardly think how strange rest and inaction seem to me.

Often in the morning, when only half awake, I begin to dress furiously, thinking I am late and that the orchestra is waiting for me. Then, after a moment's reflection—as the real state of the case dawns on me—What orchestra? I say to myself. I am in Paris, where the opposite custom prevails, and it is the orchestra that keeps the conductor waiting! Besides, I am not giving concerts; I have no chorus to teach, no symphony to conduct. I shall

[1] M. A. Morel is one of my greatest friends, and also one of the best musicians of my acquaintance. There is real merit in his compositions.

not see either Meyerbeer or Mendelssohn this morning, nor Lipinski, nor Marschner, nor Bohrer, nor Schlosser, nor Mangold, nor the brothers Müller, nor any of those excellent German artists, who welcomed me so kindly and gave me so many proofs of deference and devotion.

There is scarcely any music in France just now, and you, my friend, whom I was so pleased to see again, seem so sad and discouraged whenever I question you about what was done in Paris during my absence, that I feel a strong desire to return to Germany, where there is still some enthusiasm left. And yet what unbounded resources we possess in this Parisian whirlpool, the centre of the restless ambition of all Europe! What splendid results might be obtained if all the means at the disposal of the Conservatoire, the Gymnase musical, our three lyrical theatres, the churches, and the singing schools could be united! With a judicious selection from these various elements, one might form, if not an irreproachable chorus (the voices are not sufficiently trained for that), at least a matchless orchestra! In order to give the Parisians a chance of hearing a really splendid body of eight or nine hundred musicians, only two things are wanting, a place to seat them, and a little love of art to draw them together. We have not even a large concert-room! The theatre of the Opéra might serve the purpose, if the machinery and decorations required by the *répertoire* did not occupy the stage nearly every day, and so make the preparations for such a ceremony almost impossible.

But should we, even then, find the general sympathy, the unity of sentiment and action, devotion and patience, without which nothing grand or beautiful in this line can ever be produced? One can only hope so. The exceptional order prevailing at the rehearsals at the Con-

servatoire, and the zeal of its members, are universally admired. Still, only that which is rare is so highly prized. In Germany, on the contrary, I found an almost universal order and attention combined with real respect for the master—or masters. For, in fact, there are several masters: first, the composer himself, who almost always conducts his own rehearsals and performances, without in the least wounding the conductor's self-love; next, the kapell-meister,[1] usually an able composer, who conducts the principal operas and all important musical works of which the authors are either absent or dead; and the leader,[2] who directs the small operas and ballets, and also acts as first violin when not conducting, in which case he conveys the kapell-meister's remarks and directions to the further end of the orchestra, superintends the material details of the studies, sees that nothing is wanting either in the way of music or instruments, and sometimes points out the bowing or phrasing of a passage—a task forbidden to the kapell-meister, who always conducts with a baton.

In Germany, as elsewhere, there must doubtless be a good deal of hidden and insubordinate vanity among so many musicians of unequal merit; but, with one single exception, I cannot remember ever having met with a remonstrance — possibly because I do not understand German.

I did not meet many able chorus-masters. Most of them were bad pianists; indeed I met one who could not play the piano at all, and only gave the notes by striking the keys with two fingers. In Germany, as in France, they still keep up the habit of uniting all the voices in one

[1] Or Conductor.

[2] Maître de Concert; in German, Concert-meister.

room under one conductor, instead of having separate practising rooms and conductors for preliminary rehearsals; a proceeding which saves time, and brings about excellent results in the instruction of the different choral parts. The German choristers, especially the tenors, have generally fresher and purer voices than those of our theatres; but one must not be too hasty to award them the palm, and if you care to follow me to the different towns I visited, you will soon see, that except at Berlin, Frankfort, and perhaps Dresden, the chorus at all the theatres is bad or at best indifferent. On the other hand, the German Singing Academies must be included among the musical glories of the country. Later on we will try to find out the reason of this difference.

My journey began under unfavourable auspices; mishaps and misfortunes of all sorts succeeded each other in the most troublesome manner, and I assure you, my dear friend, that it needed a stubborn determination to pursue it to the end. When I left Paris, I thought myself sure of three concerts at the outset; the first at Brussels, where I had been engaged by the Society of the Grande Harmonie, and two others were already announced at Frankfort by the manager of the theatre, who seemed to think them of importance, and to be anxious for a good performance. But what resulted from all these fine promises and marked attentions? Absolutely nothing. This is what took place. Madame Nathan-Treillet had kindly promised to come expressly from Paris and sing at the Brussels concert. Just as the rehearsals were beginning, and the concert was announced, we heard that she had been taken seriously ill, and could not therefore possibly leave Paris. Madame Nathan-Treillet has left such recollections in Brussels of the time when she was

prima donna of the theatre, that one does not exaggerate in saying that she is simply adored there; she makes a perfect *furore*, and, according to the Belgians, all the symphonies in the world are not worth one romance of Louisa Puget's sung by Madame Treillet.

At the announcement of this catastrophe the Grande Harmonie collapsed, the smoking-room adjoining the concert-hall became a desert, every pipe was as suddenly extinguished as if the air were exhausted, and the Grand Harmonists dispersed with groans. In vain did I seek to console them by saying, "There will be no concert; make yourselves easy, you will not have the discomfort of listening to my music; surely that is compensation enough for so great a misfortune." Nothing could make it up to them.

Their eyes dissolved in beery tears—*et nolebant consolari*—because Madame Treillet was not coming. The concert, therefore, fell through. The conductor of this Grande Harmonie Society, a man of undoubted merit, and an eminent artist quite devoted to his art, though not exactly disposed to give way to despair even when Mademoiselle Puget's romances failed—in a word, Snel himself, who had invited me to come to Brussels—with shame and embarrassment

Jurait, mais un peu tard, qu'on ne l'y prendrait plus.

What was I to do? address myself to the rival society —the Philharmonic, conducted by Bender, leader of the Guides' admirable band? Collect a brilliant orchestra, by combining that of the theatre with the Conservatoire? The thing was easy, thanks to the kindly intentions of Messrs. Henssens, Mertz, and Wery, who on a former occasion had all been eager to influence their friends and

pupils in my favour. But this would have been to embark on fresh expenses; and besides, time failed me, as I thought I was expected at Frankfort for the two concerts just mentioned. I had to start, therefore, full of anxiety as to the possible consequences of this dreadful disappointment to the Belgian *dilettanti*, and of self-reproaches as the innocent and humiliated cause of it. Happily this kind of remorse does not last long—it vanishes like steam, and I had scarcely been an hour on the Rhine boat, admiring the river and its banks, before I had forgotten all about it. The Rhine! ah, that is grand and beautiful! Perhaps, my dear Morel, you think I shall seize this opportunity of practically enlarging upon it. Heaven forbid! I know too well that any amplification of mine would only be a prosaic abridgment; and besides, for your own credit, I would rather think that you had read and re-read Victor Hugo's beautiful book.

On my arrival at Mayence, I hastened to make inquiries as to the Austrian military band which had been there the year before, and according to Strauss—the Paris Strauss[1]—had performed several of my overtures with

[1] The name of Strauss is now celebrated throughout dancing Europe; it is attached to a number of fanciful and piquant waltzes of novel rhythm and a gracefully original movement, that have now gone the round of the entire world. It may be imagined, therefore, that one does not much care to see such waltzes imitated, or such a name forged.

But what is the case? There is one Strauss in Paris—he has a brother; there is another Strauss at Vienna, who has no brother; such is the only distinction between the two. Hence various disagreeable occurrences for our Strauss, who conducts all the balls at the Opéra Comique, and all the private balls given by the aristocracy, with a *verve* worthy of his name. At the Austrian embassy, a Viennese, obviously a spurious one, recently accosted Strauss in the Austrian language, and said:

great *verve* and power, and immense effect. The regiment was gone; no more *musique d'harmonie* (this was really a Grande Harmonie). Concerts were impossible. I had fondly imagined I should be able to entertain the inhabitants of Mayence with that farce *en passant;* still, it must be attempted.

I went accordingly to Schott, the patriarch of music publishers. That worthy man, like the famous beauty in the wood, looks as though he had slept for the last hundred years, and to all my questions he replies slowly, interlarding his words with prolonged pauses: "I don't think . . . you could . . . give a concert . . . here . . .

"Ah, how are you, my dear Strauss? I am delighted to see you. You don't remember me?"

"Not at all."

"Oh! I know you very well, though you have got a little stouter. Besides, no one but you can write such waltzes. You alone could assemble and conduct such an orchestra for dance music; there is but one Strauss."

"You are very good; but I assure you that Strauss of Vienna i also talented."

"How! Strauss of Vienna? But you are he. There is no other. I know you quite well. You are pale—so is he; you write fascinating dance music."

"Yes."

"You always accentuate the weak beat in the *trois-temps* time."

"Oh, the weak beat is my forte!"

"You have written a waltz called *Le Diamant.*"

"Sparkling."

"You speak Hebrew?"

"*Very well.*"

"And English!"

"*Not at all.*"

"That's the man![a] you *are* Strauss; besides, your name is on the handbills."

"Sir, once more I am *not* Strauss of Vienna. He is not the only man who can syncopate a waltz. I am Strauss of Paris; my brother,

[a] "Have you a strawberry mark on your left arm?" "No." "Then you are my long-lost brother."—*Box and Cox.*

there is no orchestra . . . there is no . . . public . . . we have no money."

As I had not an over-large amount of patience, I quickly made for the station and started for Frankfort. You may think I had not yet had enough to annoy me. Like Schott, the train had also gone to sleep; it hardly went at all, it lounged; that day more especially it made interminable halts at each station. Still, every *adagio* has an end, and I reached Frankfort before nightfall. What a charming, cheerful town it is! An air of wealth and activity reigns everywhere; besides, it is well built, as white and glistening as a five-franc piece, with a fragrant and verdant girdle of boulevards, planted in the English style with shrubs and flowers. Although

a very good violinist (there he is, by-the-way), is likewise Strauss. Strauss of Vienna is also Strauss. There are three Strausses."

"No, there is only one; you are trying to mystify me."

Exit the incredulous Viennese, leaving our Strauss much irritated and puzzled to get his identity verified, so much so that he entreats me to extricate him from this twin dilemma.

I accordingly declare that Strauss of Paris, a pale man, speaking Austrian and Hebrew wonderfully well, French rather badly, and English not at all, writing enchanting waltzes, full of delicious rhythmical coquetteries and exquisitely instrumented, and conducting his gay dance-orchestra with a somewhat melancholy air though with undoubted talent—this Strauss has, as I affirm, lived in Paris for a long time, played the alto at all my concerts for ten years past, belongs to the orchestra of the Théâtre Italien, goes every summer to Aix, Geneva, Mayence, Munich—where he makes a good deal of money—goes everywhere, in fact, except to Vienna, from which he stays away, out of consideration for the other Strauss, who, for all that, himself went once to Paris.

Consequently the Viennese have only to stand to what has been said to keep their Strauss, and let us keep ours. Let everyone, in fact, render to Strauss that which does not belong to Strauss, and cease to attribute to Strauss that which is his; otherwise—such is the force of prejudice—one would end by saying that the paste of Strauss was better than the diamond of Strauss, and that the diamond of Strauss was only paste.

it was the month of December, and both verdure and flowers had long since disappeared, the sun gleamed brightly through the bare branches of the trees; and whether from the contrast between those light and airy alleys and the dark streets of Mayence, or from the hope I had of at last beginning my concerts at Frankfort, or from some other cause not to be analysed, a chorus of happy voices started within me, and I took a delicious walk for two hours. "Business may wait till to-morrow," I said to myself as I went back to the hotel.

Accordingly, the following day I went early to the theatre, expecting to find it all ready for rehearsal. On crossing the square where it stands, and seeing some young men with wind instruments, I requested them, as they evidently belonged to the orchestra, to give my card to Guhr, the Director and Kapell-meister. At sight of my name, the indifference of these good honest artists changed at once to a respectful cordiality which did me real good. One of them understood French, and spoke for the others. "We are very happy to see you at last. Herr Guhr announced your arrival to us some time ago; we have twice performed your overture to *King Lear*. You will not find your Conservatoire orchestra here, but still, perhaps, you will not be wholly dissatisfied!" Enter Guhr. A small man with rather a shrewd countenance, keen piercing eyes, rapid gestures, brief and incisive speech. It is plain that he will never err through over-indulgence when at the head of his orchestra; everything about him indicates musical intelligence and will: he is a leader. He speaks French, but not fluently enough to keep up with his impatience, and he interlards every sentence in the funniest manner with great oaths pronounced German

fashion. I shall only designate them by initials. On seeing me: "Oh, S. N. T. T.,[1] is it you, my dear fellow? Then you did not get my letter?"

"What letter?"

"I wrote to you to Brussels to tell you . . . S. N. T. T. . . . Wait a bit. I can't speak properly . . . a misfortune! . . . a great misfortune! . . . Ah, there is the manager, who will act as my interpreter."

And continuing to speak in French: "Tell M. Berlioz how vexed I am; that I wrote to him not to come here yet; that the little Milanollos are filling the theatre every evening, that we have never had such a public *furore* before. S. N. T. T. And that we shall be obliged to keep the good music and the grand concerts for some other time."

The Manager: "M. Guhr desires me to tell you, sir, that"

H. B.: "Don't trouble yourself to repeat it. I understand quite well—too well indeed, seeing that he did not speak German."

Guhr: "Oh! ah! I spoke French, S. N. T. T., without knowing it."

H. B.: "You know it very well, and I know too that I shall have to go back, or else pursue my road at the risk of finding some other infant prodigies to check-mate me elsewhere."

Guhr: "What is to be done, my dear fellow? the children make money, S. N. T. T. French songs make money, French vaudevilles draw crowds; what would you have? S. N. T. T. I am the manager; I can't refuse money; but at any rate stop till to-morrow, you shall

[1] "Sacré Nom te Tieu."

hear *Fidelio*, done by Pischek and Mdlle. Capitaine, and, S. N. T. T., you shall give me your opinion about our artists."

H. B.: "I am sure they are first-rate, especially under your direction; but my good Guhr, why do you swear so dreadfully? Do you think it is any consolation to me?"

"Oh! ah! S. N. T. T. One may do that *en famille*" (he meant to say when one *is familiar*).

Whereupon I burst into an insane fit of laughter, my wrath vanished, and, taking his hand, I said:

"Well, since we are *en famille*, come and drink some Rhine wine. I forgive you for your little Milanollos, and will stay and hear *Fidelio* and Mdlle. Capitaine, to whom I fancy you would like to act as lieutenant."

We settled that I should set off in two days for Stuttgart—where, however, I was not expected—there to try my fortune with Lindpaintner and the King of Wurtemberg. I was obliged, therefore, to give the inhabitants of Frankfort time to recover their composure, and forget some of the delicious emotions excited by the violins of those two charming sisters, whom I had been the first to applaud in Paris, but whose presence in Frankfort was singularly inconvenient to me. The next day I heard *Fidelio*. It was one of the finest representations I have seen in Germany; Guhr was right to propose it as a compensation for my disappointment, for I have seldom had a more perfect musical treat.

I thought that Mdlle. Capitaine, in the part of Leonora, had all the musical and dramatic characteristics required by Beethoven's grand creation. Her voice has a peculiar tone, exactly suitable to the deep though repressed feeling of Florestan's heroic spouse. Her singing

is simple and perfectly in tune, and her acting is always true to nature. In the famous pistol scene she does not bring down the house as Mdme. Schroeder-Devrient did with her convulsive nervous laugh, when we saw her as a young woman in Paris, sixteen or seventeen years ago; she arrests your attention by other means. Mdlle. Capitaine is not at all a singer in the brilliant sense of the word, but of all the women I heard in Germany in that kind of opera she is certainly the one I prefer, and yet I had never heard her name before. Others were mentioned to me as very talented, whom I thought simply detestable.

Unfortunately, I cannot remember the name of the tenor who took Florestan's part. He certainly had good points, though there was nothing remarkable about his voice. He sang the difficult prison song, not, indeed, so as to make me forget Haitzinger, but well enough to deserve the applause of a warmer public than that of Frankfort. As for Pischek, whom I appreciated better some months afterwards in Spohr's *Faust*, he taught me the full value of the Governor's part, which we could never understand in Paris, and for that alone I am really grateful to him. Pischek is an artist, and has doubtless studied much, but Nature has also greatly favoured him. He has a magnificent baritone, thrilling, flexible, true, and of considerable compass; a fine face and tall figure; youth, and plenty of fire! What a misfortune that he knows no language but German. I thought the chorus of the Frankfort theatre good; their execution was careful, their voices fresh, and generally all in perfect tune. The only thing to desire was that it had been a little larger. When a chorus numbers only about forty voices, it has always a certain harshness that disappears in a larger one.

As I did not hear them rehearsing a new work, I do not know whether the Frankfort chorus-singers are good readers and musicians; I can only say that they sang the first Prisoners' Chorus very satisfactorily—a charming piece, which needs *singing;* and the grand *finale* with the needful enthusiasm and energy. As for the orchestra, looking upon it merely as a theatre orchestra, I should pronounce it first-rate; admirable from every point of view. Not a shade escapes it; the tones melt into a harmonious and graceful whole; it never stumbles; it begins with *aplomb*, one might almost say like one instrument. No doubt Guhr's skill in conducting and his strictness at rehearsals have much to do with this happy result. The orchestra is composed as follows: 8 first violins, 8 seconds, 4 tenors, 5 cellos, 4 basses, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, and timpani. Such a body of 47 musicians is to be found, with very trifling differences, in all the smaller German towns. It is generally disposed in the following manner: the violins, tenors, and cellos together occupy the right side of the orchestra; the double basses are placed in a straight line in the middle, quite close to the railings, while the wind instruments form the rival group to the strings on the left; the kettle-drums and trombones alone are relegated to the farthest end on the right-hand side. Not having been able to put this orchestra to the severe test of symphonic studies, I can say nothing about its quickness of conception, aptitude for the accidental or humoristic style, rhythmical solidity, etc., etc., but Guhr assures me that it is quite as good at a concert as in opera. This I can believe, since Guhr is not at all too ready to over-admire his own children. The violins belong to an excellent school; the basses have

a great deal of tone. I do not know the capacity of the tenors, their part being but trifling in the operas I saw. The wind instruments are exquisite as a body. I have only one reproach to make to the horns, who have a defect that is very common in Germany, of often making the tone too brassy, especially when forcing the high notes. This way of giving out the sound spoils the tone of the horn; it may occasionally have a very good effect, but I do not think it could ever be regularly adopted in the school of the instrument.

At the end of this first-rate performance of *Fidelio*, about ten or twelve persons condescended to applaud it slightly as they were going out . . . and no more! I was indignant at such coldness, and when someone tried to persuade me that though the audience had applauded so slightly it none the less appreciated the beauty of the work. "No," said Guhr, "they understand nothing—nothing at all—S. N. T. T. . He is right, it is a vulgar public."

That evening I saw my old friend, Ferdinand Hiller, in one of the boxes. He lived a long time in Paris, where connoisseurs still talk of his great musical talent. We should soon have renewed our old ways of comradeship. Hiller is engaged on an opera for the Frankfort theatre; two years ago he wrote an oratorio, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, which has been successfully performed several times. He often gives concerts, at which, besides extracts from that work, various instrumental compositions have been produced of late years, and are very well spoken of.

Unhappily, whenever I have been at Frankfort it has always so happened that Hiller's concerts took place the day after I had to leave, so that I can only quote the opinion of others about him, which exculpates me entirely

from any want of loyalty. At his last concert he gave a new overture, which was warmly received, and several pieces for four male voices and a soprano, which I have been told had a strikingly original effect.

At Frankfort, there is a musical institution which I have often heard highly spoken of. It is the St. Cecilia's Singing Academy, and has the name of being well managed; however, as I was never admitted to it I must maintain the strictest reserve on the subject.

Although the vulgar element prevailed in the Frankfort public, yet taking into consideration the great number of persons in the upper classes who really study music, it seems impossible that one should not be able to collect an audience intelligent enough to enjoy great works of art. At any rate, I had not time to try the experiment.

Now, my dear Morel, I must call up my recollections of Lindpaintner and the orchestra at Stuttgart. I will make them the subject of a second letter, not, however, to be addressed to you, as I must also answer those of our friends who are as eager as you are to hear the details of my German expedition. Farewell.

P.S.—Have you published any songs of late? Everyone is talking of the success of your last. Yesterday I heard the rondo *Page et Mari*, which you composed to the words of Alexandre Dumas fils. I think it very delicate and coquettish, piquant and charming. You never wrote anything so well in that style. That rondo will be intolerably popular. You will be put in the pillory by all the barrel-organs of Barbary, and you will have deserved it richly.

H. B.

CHAPTER LIII.

Stuttgart—Hechingen.

Letter II.—To Monsieur Girard.

The first thing I had to do before leaving Frankfort to try my fortune in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, was to find out what were the musical resources of Stuttgart, make a concert programme suited to their powers, and only carry with me the music absolutely essential to its performance. You must know, my dear Girard, that one of the greatest and most unforeseen difficulties of my travels arose from the immense expense attendant on the carriage of my music. You will easily understand this when I tell you that the mass of separate orchestra and chorus parts, manuscript, lithographed, or engraved, was very heavy, and had to follow me almost everywhere by stage-coach at a ruinous cost. This time, however, being uncertain whether I should go to Munich after my visit to Stuttgart, or return to Frankfort on my way northwards, I only took two symphonies, an overture, and some songs, and left all the rest with that unfortunate Guhr, who was evidently fated to be bothered with my music in one way or another.

There is nothing interesting about the road from Frankfort to Stuttgart,[1] and my impressions of it are not worth

[1] The network of railways with which Germany is now intersected did not exist at that time.

telling. I saw no romantic spots, no dark forests, no convents, no lonely chapels, no torrents; no nocturnal sounds, not even from Don Quixote's windmills; neither huntsman, nor milkmaid, nor weeping maiden, nor straying heifer, nor lost child, nor distracted mother, nor shepherd, nor thief, nor brigand; nothing, in fact, but the moonlight, the noise of the horses, the snoring of the conductor. Here and there some ugly peasants in large three-cornered hats and long dirty linen coats, with absurdly long tails that got entangled between their muddy legs; a costume which gave them the appearance of village curés *en déshabille*. Nothing more!

The first person to be seen on my arrival at Stuttgart—indeed, the only one whom I had any reason to suppose would be favourably disposed towards me, owing to the kindness of a mutual friend—was Dr. Schilling, the author of a great many theoretical and critical works on musical art. His title, a very common one, had made me augur rather unfavourably of him. I imagined some old pedant with spectacles, a reddish wig, and huge snuff box, always mounted on his hobby of fugue and counterpoint, talking of nothing but Bach and Marpurg; outwardly polite perhaps, but at bottom hating all modern music in general and mine in particular; in a word, an old musical curmudgeon. Now, you see how one may be mistaken. M. Schilling is not old, does not wear spectacles, has fine black hair of his own, is full of animation, speaks loud and rapidly, almost like pistol shots, and is a smoker, not a snuff-taker. He received me very kindly, at once gave me all the necessary information about my concert, never said a word about fugues or canons, showed no contempt either for the *Huguenots* or *William Tell*, and expressed no aversion to my music

before hearing it. Besides, conversation was anything but easy between us when there was no interpreter, M. Schilling speaking French much as I speak German.

One day, impatient at not being able to make himself understood, he said:

"Do you speak English?"

"I know a few words—and you?"

"I—no! But Italian, do you know Italian?"

"Si, un poco. Come si chiama il direttore del teatre?"

"Oh bother! not to speak Italian either!"

I believe, heaven forgive me, that if I had declared myself unable to understand either English or Italian, the hot-tempered doctor would willingly have played the scene in the *Médecin malgré Lui*, in those two languages with me: *Arcithuram, catalamus, nominativo, singulariter; estne oratio latinas?*

We did try Latin, and understood each other after a fashion, not, however, without some *arcithuram catalamus*. But it may easily be imagined that conversation was rather difficult, and did not flow after Herder's ideas, nor yet according to Kant's "Critique of pure Reason." M. Schilling was able to let me know, however, that I could give my concert either in the theatre or the Salle de la Redoute, a room intended for musical ceremonies of this sort. In the first case, besides the enormous advantage of the royal presence, which he thought he could certainly secure for me in a town like Stuttgart, I should have a gratuitous performance, without having to trouble myself either about tickets or advertisements, or any of the material details of the evening. In the second, I should have had to pay the orchestra, and manage everything myself, and the King would not be present—he never went to the concert-room.

I accordingly followed the doctor's advice, and hastened to present my request to the Baron M. de Topenheim, Grand Marshal of the Court, and superintendent of the theatre. He received me with charming urbanity, assuring me that he would speak to the King that very evening about my petition, which he thought would be granted.

"I had better tell you one thing, however," added he, "and that is that the Redoute is the only good room for concerts, and that in the theatre, on the contrary, there is such a dreadful echo that for a long time past they have given up playing any important instrumental work there."

I hardly knew what to reply or what to decide upon. "I had better go and see Lindpaintner," I said to myself, "he must be the best judge." My dear Girard, I cannot tell you what good my first interview with that excellent artist did me. At the end of five minutes we felt as if we had been friends for the last ten years. Lindpaintner soon enlightened me as to my position.

"In the first place," said he, "I must undeceive you about the musical importance of our town. True, it is a royal residence, but it has neither money nor a public" (ah! I thought of Mayence and Father Schott). "However, as you are here, it must not be said that we let you go without playing some of your compositions, which we are so anxious to know. This is what we must do. The theatre is useless, absolutely useless for music. The question of the King's presence is of no moment whatever. His Majesty never goes to a concert, and will not appear at yours, no matter where you give it. So take the Redoute room, which is excellent for sound and orchestral effects. As for the musicians, you will only have to expend a small sum of eighty francs for their pension

fund,[1] and all without exception will make it their duty as well as feel it an honour, not merely to perform, but to rehearse your works often under your direction. Come and hear the *Freyschütz* this evening. I will introduce you to the band after one of the acts, and you will see if I have done wrong in answering for their good-will."

I took care not to miss this appointment. Lindpaintner introduced me to the artists, and after he had translated a little speech which I thought I ought to address to them, all my doubts and perplexities vanished. I had an orchestra composed much like that at Frankfort —youthful, vigorous, and full of fire. I could easily see this by the way in which all the instrumental part of Weber's *chef d'œuvre* was performed. The chorus seemed to me rather ordinary, few in number, and not very careful in the interpretation of the well-known *nuances* of that admirable score. They always sang *mezzo-forte*, and appeared rather bored by their task. As for the actors, they were all unmistakably mediocre. I do not remember one of their names. Agatha, the prima donna, has a sonorous but hard voice; the second female singer, Annette, sings with more flexibility, but often out of tune; the baritone, Gaspard, is I think the best voice in the theatre. I heard the same company afterwards in the *Muette de Portici*, without changing my opinion about them. Lindpaintner, in conducting these two operas, astonished me by the rapidity with which he took the time of certain pieces. Afterwards I saw that many German kapell-meisters are the same in this respect, among others Mendelssohn for example, Krebs, and Guhr. I can say nothing about the time of the *Freyschütz*, because

[1] *Caisse de Pension.*

no doubt they know more about it than I do, but as for the *Muette*, the *Vestale*, *Moses*, and the *Huguenots*, which were got up in Paris in the presence of their own composers, and the time of which has been preserved as it was when they were first performed, I maintain that the tremendous pace at which I heard them performed at Stuttgart, Leipzig, Hamburg, and Frankfort is inaccurate; unintentional, no doubt, but none the less injurious to the effect. And yet in France it is believed that the Germans drag all our movements! The Stuttgart orchestra is composed of 16 violins, 4 tenors, 4 cellos, 4 basses, and the wind and percussion instruments necessary to perform most of the modern operas; and there is also an excellent harpist, one M. Krüger, and this is rare for Germany. The study of that fine instrument is neglected here, apparently without reason, in an absurd and even barbarous way. Indeed I am inclined to believe that this was always the case, considering that none of the German masters have ever made use of it. There is no harp part in any of Mozart's works, neither in *Don Juan*, *Figaro*, the *Magic Flute*, the *Seraglio*, *Idomeneo*, *Cosi fan tutte*, nor in his masses or symphonies. Weber also abstained from using it, likewise Haydn and Beethoven;[1] Gluck alone wrote an easy harp part in *Orphée*, *for one hand only*, and yet that opera was composed and represented in Italy. There is something in this at once amazing and annoying to me. . . . It is a disgrace to the German orchestras, who ought all to have at least two harps, especially now that they perform French and Italian operas, in which they are so frequently employed. The Stuttgart violins are first-

[1] [Not quite correct. There is a harp part in No. 5 of the *Prometheus* music.]

rate; it is plain that most of them have been trained by Molique, the leader, whose vigorous playing, severe though slightly monotonous style, and learned compositions, we admired some years ago at the Conservatoire. Molique, being first violin both at the theatre and at all the concerts, has for the most part nothing to do but superintend his pupils, who all profess the sincerest respect and admiration for him. Hence a rare correctness in their execution, due as much to oneness of feeling and method as to the attention of the players.

I must make special mention of the second leader, Habenheim, a distinguished artist in every respect. I heard one of his cantatas, in an expressive and melodious style, well harmonised and instrumented. The other stringed instruments, if not equal to the violins, might fairly be considered very good. I may say the same for the wind instruments; the first clarinet and first oboe are capital. The elder Krüger, who takes the part of first flute, unhappily uses an antique instrument, that leaves much to be desired in purity of tone and power of producing the higher notes. M. Krüger ought also to beware of yielding to the temptation of introducing shakes and runs where the author has abstained from writing them.

M. Neukirchner, the chief bassoon, is a first-rate virtuoso, though too much disposed perhaps to make a parade of great difficulties; besides, he plays such a bad instrument that one's ears are hurt every moment by questionable intonations which spoil the effect of the best played passages. M. Schuncke stands out among the horns; but he, like his compeers at Frankfort, makes the tone of his high notes a little too brassy. At Stuttgart, they only use cylinder or chromatic horns. Adolphe Sax, a skilled instrument

maker, in Paris, has amply proved the superiority of this system over that of pistons, now almost abandoned throughout Germany, while the cylinder system is coming into general use for horns, trumpets, bombardons, and bass tubas. The Germans give the name of valve-instruments (ventil-horn, ventil-trompet) to those that are made with this mechanism. I was surprised not to see it adopted for the trumpets in the military band at Stuttgart, otherwise a very fair one; they still use a very imperfect instrument with two pistons, which, for tone and sonority, is far behind the cylinder trumpet, now in general use elsewhere. I am not speaking of Paris; some ten years hence we shall have them there.

The trombones have considerable power. The first, M. Schrade, who four years ago was a member of the Vivienne concert orchestra at Paris, has undoubted talent. He is thoroughly master of his instrument, revels in difficulties, and has a magnificent tone; I might indeed say tones, for by some inexplicable process he can produce three or four notes at a time, like the young horn player[1] with whom the musical press has lately been occupied in Paris. Schrade, in a bar of a fantasia which he performed in public at Stuttgart, caused general astonishment by playing the four notes in the chord of the dominant 7th simultaneously, in this order $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{E flat}\\ \text{A}\\ \text{C}\\ \text{F}\end{matrix}\right\}$. It is for those learned in acoustics to account for this new phenomenon in sonorous tubes, and it is for us musicians to study it well, and profit by it on occasion.

Another merit of the Stuttgart orchestra is the number

[1] Vivier, the ingenious humorist, an eccentric artist, but one of real merit and rare musical talent.

of bold readers it contains, who are never troubled or put out by anything, who can read at once a note and its *nuance*, and never even at first sight let a *p* or *f*, a *mezzo-forte* or *smorzando*, escape them. Moreover, they have been broken in to all the caprices of rhythm and measure, not sticking to strongly-marked time, but able to accentuate the weak beat without hesitation, and go from one syncopated passage to another without fuss or the air of having performed a difficult feat. In a word, their musical education is complete in every respect. At the very first rehearsal of my concert, I recognised all these valuable qualities. I had chosen the *Symphonie Fantastique* and the overture to the *Francs Juges*. You know the rhythmical difficulties of these two works—syncopated phrases crossing each other, groups of four notes on groups of three, etc., all of which are now boldly performed for the public of Paris at the Conservatoire, but at which we had nevertheless to work long and diligently. I had reason, therefore, to apprehend a great many mistakes in the overture and in the *finale* of the symphony. But there was not one. Everything was read and mastered at first sight. My astonishment was extreme; yours will not be less so when I tell you that we got up that d——d symphony and the remainder of the programme in two rehearsals. The effect would indeed have been more satisfactory if half the violins had not been kept away on the day of the concert by illness, real or assumed. Can you see me with four first violins and four seconds, struggling with all those wind and percussion instruments? For the epidemic had spared the rest of the orchestra, and nothing was wanting except half the violins! I would gladly have imitated Max in *Freyschütz*, and signed a compact with all the

devils in hell to get violins. It was all the more vexatious and irritating because, notwithstanding Lindpaintner's prognostications, the King and his Court were present. In spite of the gaps at certain of the music-stands, the performance, though not a powerful one—that was impossible—was at any rate intelligent, correct, and animated. The most effective pieces in the *Symphonie Fantastique* were the *adagio* (the *Scène aux Champs*) and the *finale* (the *Sabbat*). The overture was warmly received; but as for the *Pilgrims' March* in *Harold*, which also figured in the programme, it was scarcely even noticed. The same thing happened at another concert, when I was so imprudent as to give it by itself; whereas, where I have played the whole of *Harold*, or at least the first three movements, the march has been as much applauded as it was in Paris, and often encored—a fresh proof of the necessity of not breaking up certain compositions, and of only producing them at the proper time and from the suitable standpoint.

Must I now tell you of all the congratulations I received on the part of the King, through Count Neiperg and Prince Jerome Bonaparte, when the concert was over? Well! why not? Princes are well known to be in general very kindly disposed towards foreign artists, and I should in reality only fail in modesty if I were to repeat what some of the musicians said to me that evening and on the following days. Besides, why should I not fail in modesty? In order that a few ill-conditioned curs should not growl at me? It would be well worth my while to use a lot of old formal phrases, and act a comedy which could deceive no one from such a motive. True modesty would consist not merely in never speaking of oneself, but in never doing anything

worthy of being spoken of, in never attracting public attention to oneself, in never saying anything, writing or doing anything, in hiding oneself, in fact—not even living. That would be absurd! . . . Besides, I have made up my mind to confess everything, both in the way of good and ill luck. I began so in my last letter, and am ready to go on with it in the present one. For instance, I am afraid that Lindpaintner, who is a master, and whose approbation I greatly coveted, liked nothing but the overture, and quite abominated the symphony. I would not mind betting that Molique liked nothing whatever. As for Dr. Schilling, I am sure that he thought it all execrable, and was quite ashamed at having taken the first step towards introducing a brigand of my stamp at Stuttgart—one who was strongly suspected of having outraged music, and who, if he should succeed in inspiring it with his passion for freedom and vagrancy, would infallibly turn the chaste muse into a sort of gipsy woman, not so much an Esmeralda as a Helen MacGregor, an armed virago with hair floating to the winds, and dark tunic sparkling with gaudy trinkets, springing barefoot over the wild rocks, dreaming to the sound of the wind and tempest, and with her fierce glances terrifying women and troubling men, without inspiring them with love.

Schilling, as counsellor to the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, took care, however, to write to his highness, proposing that the curious savage who was more in his element in the Black Forest than in a civilised town should go there and amuse him. And the savage, being inquisitive about everything, and having received a courteous invitation from Baron de Billing, another of the Prince's familiar advisers, set forth through the great

snow-covered pine woods for the little town of Hechingen, without much troubling himself as to what he should do there.

This excursion into the Black Forest left a curious mixture of recollections behind it—some happy, some sad, some sweet, and some painful—which I cannot evoke from the past without an anguish that is almost inexplicable. The cold, the funereal black and white aspect of the mountains, the wind howling through the shivering pine trees, the secret gnawings of heart so powerfully felt in solitude, a sad episode in a melancholy novel I read during the journey. . . . Then the arrival at Hechingen, the gay smiling faces, the amiability of the Prince, the New Year festivities, balls, concerts, wild laughter, projects of meeting again in Paris, farewells and departure.

Oh, how I suffered! What devil prompted me to tell you all this? As you see, there is nothing romantic or touching in it. . . . But I am so constituted that I sometimes suffer without any apparent reason, just, as in certain electrical conditions of the atmosphere, the leaves on the trees tremble though there may be no wind.

Fortunately, my dear Girard, you have known me for a long time, and so will not think these facts leading to nothing, this introduction without an *allegro*, this subject minus a fugue, too absurd. Upon my word, you must confess that a subject without a fugue is a piece of rare good fortune; for we have both read scores of fugues that have no subject, to say nothing of those with bad subjects. Well, well! my melancholy has gone off now, thanks to the interruption of a fugue (an old dotard that has so often bothered us). I am in a better temper, and must now proceed to tell you all about Hechingen.

When I said it was a little town, I was exaggerating

its importance geographically. Hechingen is only a big village, or, at the outside, a market-town, built on the side of a somewhat steep hill, rather like the upper part of Montmartre, or Subiaco in the Roman States. Above the town and situated in such a way as to command it entirely, is the Villa Eugenia, the Prince's residence. To the right of this little palace there is a deep valley, and a little farther on a bare desert peak crowned by the old castle of Hohenzollern, now only a hunting rendezvous, but formerly the feudal residence of the Prince's ancestors. The present owner of this romantic scenery is a clever young man, lively and kindhearted, with apparently only two ruling ideas in the world, the one being the wish to make the inhabitants of his little states as happy as possible, and the other the love of music. Can you conceive of a happier existence? Everyone about him is contented. His subjects adore him; music smiles on him. He understands it both as a poet and a musician. He composes charming songs, two of which, *Der Fischerknabe* and *Schiffer's Abendlied*, really touched me by the expressiveness of their melody. He sings them with the voice of a composer, but with a fire and feeling both of heart and soul that fairly carry you away. Though he has no theatre, he has, at any rate, an orchestra, directed by Techlisbeck, an eminent master, whose symphonies are often[1] creditably performed at the Conservatoire in Paris. Under his direction the simplest of the great instrumental masterpieces are played, not indeed with much parade, but very carefully. Such is the amiable Prince, whose invitation to me was so pleasant and his welcome so cordial.

[1] [Täglichsbeck had the good fortune to have a symphony *twice* played at the Conservatoire.]

On my arrival at Hechingen, I renewed my acquaintance with Techlisbeck. I had known him in Paris five years before; here he overwhelmed me with attention, and with all those proofs of true kindness that one can never forget. He very soon acquainted me with the musical resources at our disposal. There were eight violins in all, three of them very feeble, three tenors, two cellos, and two basses. Stern, the first violin, is a virtuoso of talent; so is Oswald, the first violoncello. The pastor and registrar at Hechingen plays the first bass in a manner to satisfy the most exacting of composers. The first flute, the first oboe, and the first clarinet are excellent, though the flute does occasionally indulge in those fanciful ornamentations with which I found fault at Stuttgart. The seconds among the wind instruments are passable. The two bassoons and the two horns are not quite all that could be desired. As for the trumpets, the trombone (there is only one) and the kettle-drum, one could have wished that they were absolutely silent—they knew nothing. I can see you laughing, my dear Girard, and preparing to ask me how I was able to get on with so small an orchestra. Well, by patience and good-will, by arranging and modifying certain parts, by five rehearsals in three days, we got up the overture to *King Lear*, the *Pilgrims' March*, the *Bal* in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and several other pieces, proportioned in size to the framework intended for them. And everything went well, with precision and even *verve*.

I wrote the necessary notes in pencil upon the tenor parts, leaving out the third and fourth horns, as we had only first and second. Techlisbeck played the first harp part in the *Bal* on the piano; he had also been anxious to undertake the solo tenor in the march in *Harold*.

The Prince of Hechingen stood beside the kettle-drummer to count his bars for him, and make him come in in time. I suppressed all the passages in the trumpet parts which we agreed were beyond the scope of the two performers. The trombone alone was left to its own devices, but as it was wise enough only to play those notes with which it was familiar, such as B flat, D, F, and carefully avoided all others, it almost shone by its silence. You ought to have seen the wonderful effects produced by this music on the numerous audience assembled by his highness in this charming concert-room. However, as you may doubtless imagine, the joy I felt at all these demonstrations was mingled with impatience, and when the Prince came up and shook me by the hand I could not help saying: "Ah, monseigneur, I swear that I would take two years off my life to have my Conservatoire orchestra here now, and tackle one of these scores to which you have been so indulgent!"

"Yes, yes; I know," he answered; "you have an imperial orchestra which calls you Sire, and I am only his highness; but I will go and hear it in Paris. I'll go, I'll go!"

I hope he may keep his promise. His applause weighed on me, being but ill-deserved.

After the concert we had supper at the Villa Eugenia. The delightful gaiety of the Prince communicated itself to all his guests; he wanted me to hear one of his compositions for tenor, piano, and violoncello. Techlisbeck sat down to the piano, the composer undertook the air, and to me was allotted the task of singing the violoncello part, amid the acclamations of the assembly. The piece was much applauded, and the singular *timbre* of my treble string caused great merriment. The ladies especially

could not get over my A. Two days later, after many farewells, I was obliged to return to Stuttgart. The snow was melting on the great weeping pine trees, the white cloak on the mountains was spotted with black . . . it was profoundly melancholy. . . . I began to eat my heart out once more.

The rest is silence.

Farewell.

H. B.

CHAPTER LIV.

Mannheim—Weimar.

Letter III.—To Liszt.

On my return from Hechingen I stayed some days longer at Stuttgart, a prey to new perplexities. To all questions about my plans and the future direction of a journey scarcely yet begun, I could have answered like one of Molière's characters:

> Non, je ne reviens point, car je n'ai point été;
> Je ne vais point non plus, car je suis arrêté,
> Et ne demeure point, car tout de ce pas même,
> Je prétends m'en aller. . . .

"Go. . . . Where?" I really did not know myself. True, I had written to Weimar, but no answer had come, and I was obliged to wait for it before I could make any decision.

You, my dear Liszt, know nothing of these uncertainties; it matters little to you whether the town to which you go has a good orchestra, whether the theatre be open, or the manager place it at your disposal, etc. Of what use indeed would such information be to you? With a slight modification of the famous *mot* of Louis XIV., you may say with confidence: I myself am orchestra, chorus, and conductor. I can make my piano dream or sing at pleasure, re-echo with exulting harmonies, and rival the

most skilful bow in swiftness. Like the orchestra, it has its brass band; and like it, though without the least preparation, it can throw on the evening breeze a cloud of fairylike chords and vague airs. Neither theatre nor set-scenes are needed, no vast rows of benches, nor long rehearsals, for I want neither musicians nor music. Give me a large room and a grand piano, and I am at once master of a great audience. I have but to appear before it to be overwhelmed with applause. My memory awakens; my fingers give birth to dazzling fantasias which call forth enthusiastic acclamations. I have but to play Schubert's *Ave Maria* or Beethoven's *Adelaide* to draw every heart to myself, and make each one hold his breath. The silence speaks; admiration is intense and profound. . . . Then come the fiery shells, a veritable bouquet of grand fireworks, the acclamations of the public, flowers and wreaths showered upon the priest of harmony as he sits quivering on his tripod, beautiful young women kissing the hem of his garment with tears of sacred frenzy; the sincere homage of the serious, the feverish applause forced from the envious, the intent faces, the narrow hearts amazed at their own expansiveness. And perhaps the next day the inspired young genius departs, leaving behind him a twilight of dazzling glory and enthusiasm. It is a dream; it is one of those golden dreams inspired by the name of Liszt or Paganini.

But the composer who, like myself, must travel to make his works known, has, on the contrary, to nerve himself to a task which is never-ending, still-beginning, and always unpleasant.

Who can imagine the tortures of the rehearsals? First, he has to submit to the cold glances of the musicians,

who are anything but pleased at all this unexpected toil on his account. "What does this Frenchman want? Why doesn't he stay at home?"[1] Each takes his place, but at the very first glance round the assembled orchestra, the author perceives important gaps. He requests an explanation from the kapell-meister. "The first clarinet is ill, the wife of the oboe has just been confined, the child of the first violin has the croup, the trombones are on parade—they forgot to ask for an exemption from their military duty; the kettle-drum has sprained his wrist, the harp will not come to the rehearsal because he wants to study his part," etc., etc. Still we begin. The notes are read after a fashion, at about half the right time—a dreadful trial to the composer. Little by little, however, his instinct gains the upper hand; as it warms, his blood carries him away; he insensibly quickens the time. Then, indeed, there is a nice mess, a fearful hubbub, distracting alike to mind and ear. He is forced to stop and resume the slow *tempo*, and bit by bit repeat those long phrases, the free and rapid course of which he has so often guided in other orchestras.

But, as if this were not enough, he is presently aware of sundry strange discords from some of the wind instruments. What can be the reason? "Let me hear the trumpets alone. What are you doing? I ought to hear a third and you are playing a second. The second trumpet in C has a D; give me your D . . . very good. The first has a C which sounds F; give me your C. Fie! for shame, you are playing E flat."

"No, sir; I am playing what is written."

[1] [Berlioz here gives a curious picture of a state of things in the orchestra which has passed away for ever. Orchestras now welcome novelties, and often read at sight with astounding ease and effect.]

"But I tell you no. You are a whole note wrong."

"But I am sure that I am playing C."

"In what key is your trumpet?"

"*In E flat!*"

"Well, there now, there's the mistake; you should have the F trumpet."

"Ah, I had not noticed the signature; excuse me."

Or again, I say, "What the devil are you making that noise for over there, you kettle-drum?"

"Sir, I have a *fortissimo*."

"Not a bit of it, it is a *mezzo-forte*, there are not two *f*'s, but *m* and *f*. Besides, you are using wooden sticks, and you ought to have them with sponge-heads. It is all the difference between black and white."

"We don't know what you call 'sponge-heads,'" says the kapell-meister. "We have never seen them."

"I guessed as much, so I brought some from Paris with me. Take the pair that I have put on that table. Now then, where are we? Good heavens! twenty times too loud. And the mutes, you have forgotten the mutes."

"We haven't got them; the boy forgot to put them out. We shall have them to-morrow," etc., etc.

After three or four hours of such anti-harmonious skirmishes, not one single piece can be made intelligible. Everything is broken, inarticulate, out of tune, cold, commonplace, maddeningly discordant, and hideous! and you have to send away sixty or eighty tired and discontented musicians under this impression, saying everywhere that they don't understand what it is all about, that it is "an infernal, chaotic sort of music," and that they never tried anything of the sort before. The next day there is little if any progress, only on the third day does it begin to assume a definite shape.

Then at length does the poor composer begin to breathe, the harmony becomes clear, the *tempos* assert themselves, the melodies smile and weep, the whole mass gets compacted, and dashes boldly on. After its first stammering attempts, the orchestra begins to assume its true force. Acquaintance with the music restores courage to the astonished artists, the composer requests a fourth trial, his interpreters—to take them all round, the best people in the world—consent eagerly. This time, *fiat lux*. "Attention to the lights and shades! You are not afraid now?" "No, give us the real time." *Via!* And light dawns, art appears, thought shines out, the work is understood, and the orchestra rises, applauding and saluting the composer, the kapell-meister comes up and congratulates him, those inquisitive persons who had hitherto kept themselves hidden in the dark corners of the room now approach, get on the stage and exchange exclamations of surprise and pleasure with the musicians, at the same time casting astonished glances at the foreign master whom at first they took for a madman or barbarian. Now is the moment for rest. But let the unfortunate wretch beware of taking any. Far from it, he must redouble his care and attention, and return before the concert to superintend the arrangement of the desks, and inspect the orchestral parts to be sure they are not mixed. He must go through the ranks, red pencil in hand, and mark the German names for the keys upon the music, instead of those used in France for the wind instruments, such as *C*, *D*, *Des*, *Es*, and *Fis*, for *ut*, *re*, *re bémol*, *mi bémol*, and *fa dièse*. He has to transpose a solo for the *cor anglais* for the oboe, because the orchestra does not possess that instrument, and the performer is generally afraid to transpose it himself. He must rehearse the chorus and the solo singers

separately, if they are not sure of themselves. But the room fills, the clock strikes, the composer appears at the chief desk, pale and exhausted with fatigue of body and mind, scarcely able to stand, uncertain, faint, and discouraged, until the applause of his audience, the spirit of the performers, and love for his own work shall transform him into an electrical machine, giving forth marvellous radiations, invisible indeed, but none the less real. And then begins his compensation. Ah! then, I grant you, the composer has a life unknown to the virtuoso! With frantic delight he abandons himself to the pleasure of playing on the orchestra. With what magical influence does he sway that magnificent instrument! How the ever-increasing attention of the audience reacts upon him; his eye is everywhere; with a glance he signals their entries to voice or instrument; up, down, to the right, to the left, with his right arm he flings forth terrible chords that burst in the distance like harmonious projectiles; then he arrests all this movement; rivets the attention of all; suspends every arm, every breath, listens for a moment to the silence . . . and then gives more eager scope than ever to the whirlwind he has subdued.

> Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
> Imperio premit, ac vinclis et carcere frenat.

And in the grand *adagios*, how he revels in his own soothing harmony as he listens to the crowd of intermingled voices singing his love songs, or confiding to the solitude of the night his laments for the present and his regrets over the past. Then often, but then only, does the composer forget the public altogether; listening to himself, judging himself, and touched by the emotion which is shared by the artists around him, he takes no further heed of the impressions produced upon the

audience behind him. His heart has been thrilled by contact with poetic melody, he has felt that secret fervour, the harbinger of the soul's incandescence, his object is attained, the heaven of his art is opened to him, and what signifies earth?

Then, when all is over, and success assured, his delight is intensified a hundredfold, since it is shared by the gratified self-love of all his army. You, you great virtuosi, are kings and princes by the grace of God, you are born, as it were, on the steps of the throne; while composers have to fight, to overcome, and to conquer, in order that they may reign. But the labours and dangers of the struggle only enhance the brilliancy and intoxication of victory, and we might, perhaps, be even happier than you had we always soldiers at our command.

This, my dear Liszt, is a long digression, and has nearly made me forget that I was giving you an account of my travels. To return to them.

Whilst awaiting my letters at Stuttgart, the Society of the Redoute, under Lindpaintner's direction, gave a brilliant concert, at which I had an opportunity of observing for the second time the coldness evinced by the German public *en masse* for the most colossal conceptions of the great Beethoven.

The overture to *Leonora*, a truly grand work, performed with rare spirit and precision, was scarcely applauded at all, and that evening at the table-d'hôte I heard some grumbling that Haydn's symphonies were not given, instead of *this noisy music without any tune in it!!!* . . . Really and truly we are not so vulgar even in Paris![1] . . .

[1] [It was not so very long before this that Paris was as "vulgar" in this respect as any place in any country. Berlioz's own letters on Beethoven's Symphonies relate the difficulty which Habeneck found in *forcing* those great works on an audience who hated them.]

At last I received a favourable answer from Weimar, and started for Carlsruhe. I would willingly have given a concert *en passant*, but Strauss[1] (the kapell-meister) told me I should have had to wait eight or ten days, on account of an engagement at the theatre with a Piedmontese flutist.

I pressed on, therefore, to Mannheim, with deep respect for the great flute. This is a quiet town, very cold, level, and square. I do not think that any passion for music would ever deprive its inhabitants of their sleep.[2] Still, there is a good-sized Singing Academy, a fair theatre, and a very intelligent little orchestra. Both the orchestra and the Singing Academy are directed by the younger Lachner, brother to the celebrated composer. He is a gentle, modest, and very talented artist. He soon organised a concert for me. I do not recollect the programme. I only know that I wanted to have my second symphony (*Harold*) in full, and that after the first rehearsal I had to suppress the *finale* (the *Orgie*) because the trombones were evidently incapable of playing their part. Lachner was quite vexed about it, being desirous, as he said, to hear the whole of the *tableau.* I was obliged to be firm, however, assuring him that, independently of the trombones, it would be madness to hope to get the proper orchestral effect of the *finale* with so few violins. The three first parts of the symphony were well played, and made a great impression on the

[1] Another Strauss! but this one does not write waltzes.

[2] [Mannheim was not always cold, level, and square. At one time, in the middle of the last century, its orchestra was the first in Europe for fire, delicacy, and *nuance;* and it was after a residence there that Mozart wrote his Parisian Symphony, which was so great an advance on any of his former orchestral works, and the first indication of his real power in the orchestra.]

public. I heard that the Grand-duchess Amelia, who was present at the concert, remarked the colouring of the *Pilgrims' March*, and particularly the *Serenade in the Abruzzi*, where she fancied she again beheld the calm peacefulness of the exquisite Italian nights.

I found rather a good harpist at Mannheim, an excellent oboe, who played the *cor anglais* passably, a clever violoncello player (Heinefetter), cousin to the singer of the same name, and some bold trumpeters; but there was no ophicleide. Lachner was obliged to procure a chromatic trombone, going down to the deep C and B flat, to replace an instrument that is now employed in all the great modern works. It would have been simpler, I should have thought, to send for an ophicleide; and, speaking from a musical point of view, it would have been far better, as the two instruments are not in the least alike. I could only hear one rehearsal at the Singing Academy; its members—amateurs for the most part—have in general good voices, but are by no means all good musicians or readers.

During my stay at Mannheim, Mdlle. Sabine Heinefetter gave a representation of Norma. I had not heard her since she left the Théâtre Italien, in Paris. There is always a certain power and agility in her voice, but she forces it a little at times, and is beginning to find difficulty in sustaining her high notes; still, such as she is, Mdlle. Heinefetter is almost unrivalled among German singers, for she knows how to sing.

I was a good deal bored at Mannheim, notwithstanding the kind attentions of a Frenchman whom I had occasionally met in Paris about eight or ten years before. Doubtless this was because the very first

aspect of the inhabitants, and even of the town itself, proved plainly that any artistic movement was altogether unknown to them, and that they only regarded music as a somewhat agreeable pastime for such leisure moments as could be spared from business. Moreover, it rained perpetually. There was a neighbouring clock, too, that always sounded the minor third[1] when it struck, and a tower inhabited by a nasty hawk, whose shrill discordant cries pierced my ears from morning till night. Besides this, I was impatient to see the city of poets, where letters were awaiting me from my compatriot Chélard, the kapell-meister, and also from Lobe,[2] that truly typical German musician, whose merit and ardour of soul I know you quite appreciated.

Here I am back again on the Rhine! I meet Guhr—who was still swearing! I leave him! I see our friend Hiller for one moment at Frankfort, who tells me he

[1] In Germany I was able to make many observations on the different resonances of bells, and was convinced beyond all doubt that in this, as in all other respects, Nature smiles at our theories. Certain professors maintain that sonorous tones only resound in the major third; a mathematician has latterly been known to declare, on the contrary, that *all* bells only make the minor third; and the truth is that they give all sorts of harmonic intervals. Some give the minor third, some the fourth; one of the bells at Weimar strikes the minor seventh and the octave in succession (its own tone of F giving off the E flat and the octave); others even give the augmented fourth. It is plain, then, that the harmonious resonance of bells depends on the form given them by the moulder; on the different degrees of thickness in the metal at certain points of their curvature, and on the unknown hazard of melting and casting. [This note must be taken *pace* Helmholtz.]

[2] [A feeble *littérateur*, and still feebler composer, who edited the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* for the last few years of his life, and wrote *Fliegende Blätter für Musik*. In what sense he was a typical musician it is hard to see.]

is about to bring out his oratorio, *The Fall of Jerusalem.* I set off with a nice sore throat, sleep on the way, have an awful dream—which I shall not tell you! Weimar at last! I am very ill! Fruitless efforts on the part of Lobe and Chélard to set me up. Preparations for the concert. The first rehearsal announced. My spirits rise. I am cured!

Good! Here I can breathe! There is something in the air that tells me this is a literary, an artistic town. Its aspect corresponds exactly to my preconceived idea—tranquil, bright, airy, and peacefully dreamy, with charming surroundings, beautiful streams, shady hills, and smiling valleys. How my heart beat as I went through it. There is Goethe's abode! And there the late Grand-duke used to take part in the learned conversations of Schiller, Herder, and Wieland! This Latin inscription was traced on the rock by the author of *Faust.* Is it possible? These two little windows lighted Schiller's poor garret. In this humble lodging the great poet of all noble enthusiasm wrote *Don Carlos*, *Marie Stuart*, *The Robbers*, and *Wallenstein.* There he lived as a poor scholar. Ah! Goethe ought never to have suffered that. He, a rich minister of state, might surely have softened the lot of his friend the poet; or was there no reality in that illustrious friendship? . . . I fear it was genuine only on Schiller's side. Goethe loved himself and his accursed son Mephistopheles too well. He lived too long, and was too fearful of death.

Ah, Schiller! Schiller! you deserved a less selfish friend. I cannot take my eyes off the narrow windows, the dark house, or the wretched black roof. It is one o'clock in the morning, the moon is shining, the cold is intense. Silence everywhere . . . they have all passed away . . . little by little my breast heaves, and I

begin to tremble. Overwhelmed with veneration and regret, and with all those boundless affections with which genius, even from the tomb itself, is capable at times of inspiring an unknown survivor, I prostrate myself before the humble threshold, and in a frenzy of suffering, love, and adoration, I exclaim: Schiller! . . . Schiller! . . . Schiller! . . .

Now, my dear friend, how shall I resume my real narrative, from which I have wandered considerably? Wait! To enable myself to go back to prose and recover my composure, I will think of another inhabitant of Weimar, a man of great talent, who wrote many[1] beautiful septets, a severe pianist—in a word, Hummel! . . . There! now I am quite sober.

Chélard, first as an artist and next as a Frenchman, and my own old friend, did all he could to help me in attaining my object. The intendant, Baron de Spiegel, entering into his kind and benevolent designs, placed both theatre and orchestra at my disposal. I don't say the chorus, as he would probably not have ventured to mention them to me. But I heard them in Marschner's *Vampire*, and you cannot imagine such a set of wretches squalling out of tune and out of time. And the singers—oh, poor women! Let us not speak of them, for the sake of gallantry. But there is a bass who played the part of the Vampire; you can guess that I mean Génast! Is he not an artist in every sense of the word? above all a tragedian? I regretted that I could not stay to see him play the part of Lear in Shakespeare's tragedy, which they were getting up just as I was leaving. The band is well

[1] [Hummel wrote (not many, but) two septets—the well-known piece in D minor, and a "Grand Septuor Militaire" for pianoforte, flute, violin, clarinet, trumpet, and double-bass.]

organised; but Chélard and Lobe tried to get extra strings in my honour, and presented me with an active force of 22 violins, 7 tenors, 7 cellos, and 7 basses. The wind was sufficient, with an excellent first clarinet and a wonderfully powerful cylinder trumpet (Sax); no *cor anglais*—I had to transpose his part for a clarinet; no harpist—a good-natured young fellow, M. Montag, a meritorious pianist and perfect musician, was kind enough to arrange the two harp parts for one piano, and play them himself; no ophicleide—that they replaced by a bombardon. This was enough, and the rehearsals began. You must know that the musicians at Weimar had quite a passion for my overture to the *Francs Juges*, and had already performed it several times. They could not therefore have been better disposed, so, contrary to my usual custom, I was really happy during the rehearsal of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, also chosen by their desire. It is an intense though rare delight to be thus immediately understood. I recollect the impression produced on the band and on certain amateurs present at the rehearsal by the first movement (*Rêveries—Passions*), and the third (*Scène aux Champs*). The latter in particular seemed to hold every breath during the peroration, and after the last roll of thunder at the end of the forsaken shepherd's solo, when the recovering orchestra seems to draw a deep sigh as it dies away, I heard my neighbours also sighing in sympathy amid all their applause. Chélard admired the *March to Execution* more than anything else, but the public seemed to prefer the *Bal* and the *Scène aux Champs*. The overture to the *Francs Juges* was received like an old and welcome acquaintance. Well, there I am again, verging on conceit; and if I told you of the full room, the pro-

longed applause, the recalls, the compliments of the chamberlains on the part of their highnesses, the new friends waiting to embrace me as I left the theatre, and keeping me up till three in the morning—if, in fine, I described a success, I should be voted a ridiculous bore, a . . . Enough! that idea alarms me, in spite of all my philosophy, and I stop there. Farewell!

H. B.

CHAPTER LV.

Leipzig.

Letter IV.—To Stephen Heller.

I have no doubt, my dear Heller, that the blunder I made in my last letter of calling the Grand-duchess Stéphanie Amélie was a great source of merriment to you. But I confess that I don't make myself too miserable at the thought of your censure. If I had called the Emperor Napoleon Francis or George, well and good; but one may fairly be allowed to change the name of the sovereign of Mannheim, charming as it is. Besides, as Shakespeare says:

> What's in a name? that which we call a rose
> By any other name would smell as sweet.

At any rate, I humbly beg her highness's pardon, and if, as I hope, she grants it, I snap my fingers at your derision.

Leipzig lay most directly in my way after leaving Weimar; still I hesitated to go there, notwithstanding Felix Mendelssohn's dictatorship in that city, and our amicable relations at Rome in 1831. Since then our lines had so diverged that I confess I had not expected to find him particularly sympathetic. Chélard, who knows

him, made me blush for my doubt, and I wrote to him. His answer, which I give[1] here, was not long delayed:

"My dear Berlioz,

"I thank you most heartily for your kind letter, and for your recollection of our Roman friendship. I shall never forget it as long as I live, and I am looking forward to telling you so face to face. All I can do to make your stay at Leipzig both agreeable and happy shall be done, both as a pleasure and a duty. I think I may safely assure you that you will like the town; that is to say, the musicians and the public. I would not write to you till I had consulted several persons better acquainted with Leipzig than myself, and they all confirm me in my opinion that you will have an excellent concert. The expenses of the orchestra, the room, announcements, etc., may be one hundred and ten crowns, the receipts will probably amount to six or eight hundred. You ought to be here and decide on the programme and everything that may be necessary at least ten days beforehand. Besides this, the directors of the Subscription Concert Society have commissioned me to ask if you will allow one of your works to be performed at their concert on the 22nd of February for the benefit of the poor. I hope you will accept this proposal. I should advise you to come here as soon as you can; I shall be delighted to shake you by the hand and say, 'Welcome to Germany.' Don't laugh at my bad French, as you used to do at Rome, but remain

[1] [The autograph of this letter is in the fine collection of Mr. A. G. Kurtz, of Wavertree, Liverpool. It shows how strangely Berlioz permitted himself to garble a document which he professes to give *verbatim*. He has shortened it by a half, and sadly garbled it by correcting Mendelssohn's French.]

my good friend,[1] as you were then, and as I shall ever be to you. Yours faithfully,

"FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY."

Could I refuse an invitation couched in such terms? . . . I set out accordingly for Leipzig, not without regretting Weimar and my new friends there.

My intimacy with Mendelssohn had begun in rather an absurd way at Rome. At our first interview he spoke to me about my prize cantata of *Sardanapalus*, some of which had been played to him by Montfort, my co-laureate. On expressing my genuine dislike for the first *allegro*, he exclaimed in the greatest delight: "Ah, good! I congratulate you on your taste! I was afraid you were pleased with that *allegro*, and honestly it is a very poor production!"

We very nearly quarrelled the next day because I had been speaking enthusiastically of Gluck. He replied in a tone of mock astonishment: "Ah, you like Gluck, then, do you?" As much as to say, "How can a musician with your notions have sufficient feeling for grandeur of style and truthfulness of expression to appreciate Gluck?" I soon had an opportunity of revenge for this wanton insult. I had brought with me from Paris *Astoria's* song from Gluck's Italian opera of *Telemaco*, a beautiful air, but not very well known; and one day

[1] I have just seen in Felix Mendelssohn's letters, in what his Roman friendship for me really consisted. He writes thus to his mother, plainly alluding to me: "—— *is a regular caricature, without a spark of talent, etc., etc. I sometimes feel inclined to devour him.*" He was then one-and-twenty, and not acquainted with *one* of my scores. I had only produced the first sketch of my *Symphonie Fantastique*, which he had not read, and I only showed him my newly-finished overture to *King Lear* a few days before he left Rome. [Berlioz has quoted a very small part of Mendelssohn's opinion of him. See March 29, 1831.]

when Montfort and I were expecting a visit from Mendelssohn, I placed an unsigned manuscript copy of this song on Montfort's piano. On his arrival he at once noticed the music, which he took for a piece out of some modern Italian opera, and proceeded to try. At those words in the four last bars, "O giorno! o dolce sguardi! o rimembranza! o amor!" which are simply sublime in their musical expression, I interrupted his grotesque parody of Rubini's singing by saying with an air of utter astonishment, "Then, you don't like Gluck!"

"What! Gluck?"

"Alas, yes! my dear fellow! This piece is by him, and not by Bellini, as you thought. You see I know him better than you do, and am of your own opinion —more so, indeed, than you yourself."

One day I had been speaking of the metronome and its utility.

"What is a metronome for?" exclaimed Mendelssohn. "It is a most useless instrument. A musician who cannot guess the time of a piece at first sight is a blockhead."

I could easily have answered that there were a good many blockheads, but I held my peace.

I had hardly written anything at that time. Mendelssohn only knew my Irish melodies with pianoforte accompaniment. One day he asked me to show him the score of the overture to *King Lear*, which I had just finished writing at Nice. First he read it over slowly and attentively, and then, just as he was about to play it (which he did with matchless ability), "Give me the exact time," said he.

"Why should I? Did you not say yesterday that any

musician who could not guess the time of a piece at first sight was a blockhead?"

These repartees, or rather hard hits, annoyed him keenly, though he never allowed his vexation to be seen. He never pronounced the name of Sebastian Bach without adding ironically, "*your little pupil!*"[1] In fact he was a regular porcupine at the very mention of music; one never could be sure of not offending him. He did not mind contradiction on any other point, being very good-tempered and sweet in his disposition; and I, in my turn, abused his forbearance in the philosophical and religious discussions to which we occasionally soared.

One evening we were exploring the baths of Caracalla, and debating the question of the merits or demerits of human actions and of their reward in this life. Just as I had replied by some enormity—I forget what—to his religious and orthodox enunciations, his foot slipped and he rolled violently down a steep ruined staircase.

"Admire the divine justice," said I, as I helped him up; "I blaspheme, and it is you who fall."

This impiety on my part, accompanied by a laugh, was evidently a little too much for him, and thenceforth all religious discussions were tabooed. It was at Rome that I first heard and appreciated that exquisitely delicate and richly coloured work of his, the overture to *Fingal's Cave*. Mendelssohn had just finished it, and he gave me a pretty accurate idea of it, such is his marvellous power of rendering the most complicated score on the piano. When the sirocco was overpowering I used often to go and interrupt him in his work, for he was an inde-

[1] And very likely that was what made him wish to devour me. (1864.)

fatigable worker. Then he laid down his pen with the utmost good-humour, and seeing me bursting with spleen, would try to soothe it by playing anything I chose among such works as we both liked. How often, as I lay there peevishly on his sofa, have I sung the air from *Iphigénie en Tauride, D'une image, hélas! trop chérie,* which he used to accompany, seated properly at his piano. And then he would exclaim: "How beautiful that is; I could hear it all day without being tired." And then we would begin it again.

He was also very fond of making me hum, as I lay, certain songs I had set to Moore's melodies, in fact, he always had a certain liking for my—songs![1] After a month of these relations, which had gradually become very interesting to me, Mendelssohn departed without wishing me good-bye, and I saw him no more. His letter, therefore, was an agreeable surprise. It seemed to indicate a gracious kindness of heart, which I had not formerly observed in him, and on my arrival at Leipzig I soon discovered that this was in fact the case. At the same time he had lost none of the inflexible rigidity of his artistic principles, but he no longer sought to force them on others; and in the exercise of his functions as kapell-meister, he always limits himself to bringing forward all that he thinks good, and to leaving what is bad and pernicious in the shade. He is still, however, a little too fond of the dead.

The Society for Subscription Concerts of which he had told me is a very large one, and perfectly managed. It has a magnificent chorus, an excellent orchestra, and a perfect concert-room at the Gewandhaus, where I was

[1] [Which some are still bold enough to like better than all his other compositions put together.]

to give my concert. The moment I arrived I went to see it, and came in just in the middle of the general rehearsal of Mendelssohn's new work, the *Walpurgis Night.* At the very first hearing I was really amazed at the beautiful tone of the voices, the intelligence of the singers, the precision and spirit of the orchestra, and above all, the splendour of the composition.

I am much inclined to look upon this oratorio (*La Nuit du Sabbat*) as the most finished work[1] Mendelssohn has hitherto produced. The poem is Goethe's, but has nothing in common with the *Sabbat* scene in *Faust.* Its subject is the nocturnal assemblies held on the mountains in the first days of Christianity by a sect which remained religiously faithful to the old customs, though sacrifices on the high places had been prohibited. On the nights destined for this sacred work, armed sentinels in large numbers and strange disguises were placed at all the approaches to the mountain. At a given signal, when the priest mounted the altar and struck up the sacred hymn, this diabolical-looking troop waved their torches and weapons, uttering all manner of fearful cries and sounds, in order to drown the voices of the religious chorus and deter the profane from interrupting the ceremony. Hence, no doubt, the custom in the French language of employing the word *sabbat* as the synonym for a great nocturnal noise. You must hear Mendelssohn's music in order to have an idea of the varied resources the poem offers to a skilled composer. He has profited immensely by them. His work is perfectly clear notwithstanding its complexity; the vocal and instrumental effects are marvellously intermingled, in an ap-

[1] When I wrote this, I had not heard the fascinating score of his *Midsummer's Night's Dream.*

parent confusion that is the very acme of art. Two magnificent features, in absolute contrast, are the mysterious piece of the placing of the sentinels ("Disperse, disperse"), and the final chorus, where the voice of the priest rises calm and reverent at intervals above the infernal din of the mock demons and sorcerers. One scarcely knows what to praise most in this *finale*, the instrumentation, the choruses, or the whirlwind movement of the whole.

Just as Mendelssohn was leaving his desk, in the utmost delight at having produced this work, I came forward in rapture at having heard it. The meeting could not have been better timed; and yet, after we had exchanged the first greeting, the same sad thought struck us both simultaneously:

"And is it twelve years? twelve years since we dreamed together on the plains of Rome?"

"Yes, and in the baths of Caracalla."

"Ah! always joking! always ready to laugh at me!"

"No, no; I hardly ever jest now; it was only to prove your memory, and see if you had forgiven all my impieties. I jest so little, that at our very first interview I am going seriously to ask you to make me a present, to which I shall attach the highest value."

"What is that?"

"Give me the baton with which you have just conducted the rehearsal of your new work."

"Willingly, on condition that you send me yours."

"I shall be giving copper for gold, but never mind, I consent."

And Mendelssohn's musical sceptre was brought to me forthwith. The next day I sent him my heavy oaken staff, together with the following letter, which I think

would not have been disowned by the Last of the Mohicans himself:

"To the Chief Mendelssohn!

"Great chief! We have promised to exchange tomahawks. Mine is a rough one—yours is plain.[1] Only squaws and pale-faces are fond of ornate weapons. Be my brother! and when the Great Spirit shall have sent us to hunt in the land of souls, may our warriors hang up our tomahawks together at the door of the council-chamber."

Such was the occurrence, in its naked simplicity, out of which malicious gossip did its best to create an absurd scene. Some days later, when it came to organising my concert, Mendelssohn did really treat me like a brother. The first artist whom he introduced to me as his *fidus Achates* was Ferdinand David, the leader of the orchestra, a meritorious composer and a distinguished violinist. He spoke French perfectly, and was of the greatest help to me.

The Leipzig orchestra is not larger than those of Frankfort and Stuttgart; but as there was no lack of instrumental resources in the town, I wished to increase it, and the number of violins was therefore raised to twenty-four—an innovation which, as I afterwards heard, aroused the serious indignation of two or three critics, who had made up their minds beforehand. Twenty-four violins instead of the sixteen that had hitherto sufficed for the performance of Mozart's and Beethoven's symphonies! What insolent affectation! . . . In vain did we try to procure three other

[1] [*Le mien est grossier—le tien est simple.* Interpreted by the Leipzig wits as "I am coarse, and you are simple."]

instruments, marked for use, and indeed occupying rather prominent parts in several of my pieces (another dreadful crime); it was impossible to find a *cor anglais*, an ophicleide, or a harp. Indeed, the *cor anglais* was so dilapidated, and so extraordinarily out of tune, that notwithstanding the talent of the artist who played it, we were obliged to substitute the first clarinet.

The ophicleide, or rather the thin copper instrument shown to me under that name, was quite unlike a French one, and had scarcely any tone. It was therefore rejected, and replaced after a fashion by a fourth trombone. As for the harp, it was not to be thought of, for six months previously Mendelssohn had been obliged to get harpists from Berlin for a performance of his own *Antigone*. As I heard he had not been particularly well pleased with them, I wrote to Dresden, and Lipinski (a great artist of whom I shall shortly have occasion to speak) sent me the theatre harpist. The only question was to find the instrument. At last, after various useless visits to different makers and music-sellers, Mendelssohn heard of a certain amateur who possessed a harp, and he obtained the loan of it for a few days. But now, admire my ill-luck; when we had got the harp with a fine set of new strings, it turned out that M. Richter, the Dresden harpist who had so kindly come to Leipzig on Lipinski's invitation, was a very clever pianist and also a good violinist, but scarcely played the harp at all. He had only studied it for a year and a half, so as to be able to perform the very simple arpeggios which usually serve as an accompaniment to the airs in Italian operas. So that his courage failed him entirely at sight of the diatonic touches and harmonious arrangements so frequent in my symphony, and Mendelssohn was obliged to represent the harp solos

at the piano on the evening of the concert, to make sure of their coming in properly. What a fuss about a small matter!

However, be that as it might, the rehearsals began when my mind was once made up to all these difficulties. The orchestral arrangement in this beautiful room is so good, the relations of each performer with the conductor so simple, and the artists, besides being perfect musicians, so well trained in habits of attention by Mendelssohn and David, that two rehearsals sufficed to get up a long programme, containing, among other difficult compositions, the overtures to *King Lear*, the *Francs Juges*, and the *Symphonie Fantastique*. David, moreover, agreed to play the violin solo, *Rêverie et Caprice*, which I had written for Artôt two years before, and the orchestration of which is somewhat complicated. He performed it in a masterly manner, amid great applause from the assembly. As for the orchestra, to say that after only two rehearsals its performance was irreproachable, is to give it the highest praise. All Paris musicians, and many others also, would I think be of this opinion.

This soirée disturbed the musical conscience of the inhabitants of Leipzig, and, as far as I could judge from the polemics of the newspapers, the discussions it provoked were quite as violent as they had been in Paris some ten years ago.

While people were thus debating the morality of my musical actions, approving some and regarding others as premeditated crimes, I made that journey to Dresden which I shall speak of presently.

But not to interrupt the account of my Leipzig experiences, I must tell you, my dear Heller, what took place on my return about the concert for the benefit of

the poor, mentioned in Mendelssohn's letter, in which I had promised to take part.

As this soirée was organised entirely by the concert society, the fine Singing Academy, whose well-merited praises I have already sung to you, was placed at my disposal. Of course I readily availed myself of such a grand body of singers, and proposed the three choruses in the *finale* of *Romeo and Juliet* to the directors. A German translation of this had been made in Paris by Professor Duesberg. There was nothing to do, therefore, but to fit the translation to the notes of the voice parts. This was a long and troublesome task. Moreover, from the copyist's ignorance of German, there were so many mistakes, that Mendelssohn was obliged to waste his time in revising the text, and correcting the most glaring blunders. He was also compelled to practise the choir for nearly a week. (In Paris eight rehearsals of so large a chorus would cost four thousand eight hundred francs. And yet I am sometimes asked why I never give *Romeo and Juliet* at any of my concerts!) This academy consists chiefly of amateurs belonging to the higher classes of Leipzig society, although it is true that it also includes artists from the theatre and pupils from the St. Thomas school. A good number of rehearsals can thus be easily obtained, whenever any serious work is to be studied. When I came back from Dresden, the studies were, however, still far from being complete, the men's chorus especially leaving much to be desired. It grieved me to see a great master and virtuoso like Mendelssohn engaged in such a menial task, although it must be said he fulfilled it with unwearied patience, all his remarks being made with perfect sweetness and courtesy, the more gratifying from their rarity in like cases. As for myself, I have often

been accused of want of politeness by the ladies at the Opéra, and I fear that I deserve my reputation.[1]

Before I even begin a rehearsal with a large choir, before anything has occurred to rouse my ill-temper, I am conscious of a sort of anticipative anger tightening my throat. Indeed, my look must forcibly remind the chorus of the Gascon who kicked an inoffensive little boy in the street, and to the child's remonstrance that *he had done nothing to deserve it*, answered, "Only fancy if you *had*."

However, after two more attempts the three choruses were learnt, and the *finale* would doubtless have gone quite well with the support of the orchestra but for one of the theatre singers, who had been exclaiming for days past at the difficulty of his part (Father Laurence), and calmly demolished all the harmonious edifice we had been erecting with such labour and difficulty.

I had already remarked, even at the piano practices, that this gentleman—whose name I have forgotten—was one of that numerous class of musicians who know nothing of music; he miscounted his bars, never began properly, mistook the key, etc.; but I said to myself: "Perhaps he has not had time to study his part; he learns very difficult *rôles* for the theatre, why should he not master this?" Nevertheless, I often thought of Alizard, who always sang this scene so well, and regretted keenly that he was in Brussels, and did not know German. But at the general rehearsal the

[1] [Could any better measure of comparison between the two men have been contrived than is supplied by the contrast here given by Berlioz himself between the real simple earnestness of Mendelssohn, grudging nothing that could lead to the success of his work, and his own theatrical, ostentatious proceedings?]

night before the concert, as this gentleman had made no progress, and moreover was muttering various Teutonic imprecations below his breath whenever we had to stop the orchestra on his account, or that Mendelssohn or I had to prompt him, I finally lost patience and dismissed the band, begging it to take no further trouble with my work, the performance of which was thus plainly rendered impossible. On my return home I indulged in some sad reflections. Two composers who for years have applied all their intelligence and imagination to the study of their art, two hundred clever and careful musicians, have wearied themselves in vain for the last week, and are forced to give up their work owing to the inefficiency of one man! Oh, you singers who cannot sing, you also are as gods! . . . The society was greatly perplexed about replacing this *finale*, which would have occupied a full half-hour; an extra rehearsal, however, kindly given by the orchestra and choir on the very day of the concert, settled the matter. The overture to *King Lear*, with which the orchestra was already familiar, and the *Offertorium* from my Requiem, where the chorus have only a few notes to sing, were substituted for the movement from *Romeo*, and performed in the evening in a most satisfactory manner.

I must not forget to mention one result of the piece from the Requiem, on which I had not reckoned but to which I attach the highest value, viz., the approbation of Robert Schumann, one of the most justly renowned and critical composers in Germany.[1]

[1] At the rehearsal, Schumann, breaking his habitual silence, exclaimed: "That *Offertorium* beats everything." Mendelssohn himself complimented me on a double-bass entry in the accompaniment to my song, *L'Absence*, which was also sung at this concert.

Some days afterwards the *Offertorium* was the occasion of another compliment still more unexpected. I had had a relapse of my illness at Leipzig, and on asking my doctor what I owed him, as I was leaving the place, he replied: "Write me the theme of your *Offertorium* on this piece of paper, with your signature, and I shall still be your debtor. I have never been so struck by any music." I hesitated a little at recompensing the doctor's attentions so cheaply, but he insisted, and when I had a chance of replying to his compliment by one that was better deserved, would you believe that I was fool enough to let it slip? I wrote at the head of the page: *To Dr. Clarus.*

"*Carus,*" he said; "you are putting an *l* into my name."

I thought immediately, "*Patientibus* Carus *sed* Clarus *inter doctos,*"[1] but did not dare to write it.

I am sometimes uncommonly stupid.

A virtuoso composer like you, my dear Heller, is keenly interested in everything connected with his art, and so I think your numerous questions about the musical resources of Leipzig quite reasonable, and will proceed to answer some of them. You ask if there is anyone in Germany to be compared with the great pianist, Madame Clara Schumann?

I think not.

You request me to tell you if the musical feeling of the big-wigs at Leipzig is good, or at least inclined to what you and I would call the beautiful?

I will not.

If it is true that the creed of all who profess to love

[1] *Dear* to patients, but *illustrious* among the learned.

high and serious art is: "There is no god but Bach, and Mendelssohn is his prophet"?

I must not.

If the theatre is well organised, and if the public is wrong to be amused by Lortzing's little operas, so often performed there?

I cannot.

If I have read or heard some of those old masses for five voices with *basso continuo*, which are thought so much of at Leipzig?

I know not.

Farewell! Go on writing beautiful capriccios like your two last, and Heaven preserve you from fugues for four voices on a chorale.

H. B.

CHAPTER LVI.

Dresden.

Letter V.—To Ernst.

You particularly advised me, my dear Ernst, not to stop in the small towns on my way through Germany, because it was in the capitals alone that I should find the necessary performers for my concerts. Others gave me the same advice, and reproached me afterwards with not having followed it, and gone first to Berlin or Vienna. But you know it is always easier to give good advice than to follow it, and if I did not adopt what most people would have considered the wisest plan in my travels, it is because I could not. In the first place, I could not always time my journeys. After my useless visit to Frankfort, I could hardly go back to Paris. I would have started for Munich, had not a letter from Baermann[1] informed me that I could not give a concert there for another month, and Meyerbeer written me word that the revival of several important works at the Berlin theatre made my presence in Prussia useless for the time. I could not, however, remain idle, and accordingly, being anxious to make myself acquainted with the musical institutions of your harmonious country, I resolved to see and hear everything, and greatly to reduce my choral

[1] [The great clarinet player; friend of Weber and Mendelssohn.]

and orchestral pretensions in order to make myself more generally known. I knew that I could not expect to find all the instruments required by some of my works in the second-rate towns, but I reserved these for the end of my journey, to form the climax to the *crescendo*, and I thought that, all things considered, this slow but progressive step would not be wanting either in prudence or interest of a certain kind. In any case I have no cause to repent having taken it.

And now to speak of Dresden, where I was engaged for two concerts, and found a chorus, orchestra, wind band, and also a famous tenor. Such treasures as these I had not found since I first came to Germany. Moreover, at Dresden I was destined to meet with a devoted, energetic, enthusiastic friend, Charles Lipinski, whom I had formerly known in Paris. I cannot describe, my dear Ernst, the ardour with which this excellent man seconded me. His position of first maître de concert, and the general esteem in which both his office and talent are held, gave him great authority over the members of the band, and good use he made of it. As the intendant, Baron Lütichau, had promised me two evenings, the entire theatre was at my disposal, and the only question was to see to the performance. We succeeded perfectly, although our programme was formidable. It included the overture to *King Lear*, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, the *Offertoire*, *Sanctus*, and *Quærens me* from my Requiem, the two last parts of my *Symphonie Funèbre*—written, as you are aware, for two orchestras and chorus—and several songs. I had no translation of the chorus of the symphony, but the manager of the theatre, M. Winkler, a clever scholar, was so extremely obliging as to improvise, so to speak, the necessary German verses, and

thus we were able to begin the practices of the *finale*. As for the solos, they were in Latin, French, and German. Tichatchek, the tenor, has a pure and touching voice, which becomes very powerful when animated by dramatic action. His style of singing is simple and in good taste; he is a consummate reader and musician, and undertook the tenor solo in the *Sanctus* at first sight, without reserve, or affectation, or pretension. He might easily, like so many others in like cases, have accepted the *Sanctus* and stipulated for some familiar cavatina for his own benefit; but he did nothing of the kind. That is something like! what I call really good.

The cavatina from *Benvenuto*, which I added to the programme, gave me more trouble than all the rest. We could not propose it to Madame Devrient, as it lay too high, and the vocalisation was too delicate. Lipinski therefore offered it to Mademoiselle Wiest, the second singer, who thought the German translation bad, the *andante* too lengthy and too high, the *allegro* too low and too short. She asked for erasures and alterations, she had a cold, etc. You know by heart all the feints of a cantatrice, who neither can nor will do what she is asked. At last, Madame Schubert, wife of the excellent maître de concert and clever violinist, with whom you are acquainted, relieved me from all this bother by accepting the unfortunate cavatina, though not without misgivings, for her modesty made her exaggerate its difficulties. She was immensely applauded. In truth, it would seem as if it were more difficult at times to get up the *Fleuve du Tage* than the Symphony in C minor.

Lipinski so excited the self-love of the musicians, that their ambition to succeed, and especially to surpass the

Leipzig performance (there is a kind of hidden rivalry between the two towns), made us work tremendously hard. Four long rehearsals seemed scarcely sufficient, and the band itself would willingly have asked for a fifth if there had been time. The result, accordingly, was a first-rate performance. My only misgivings at the general rehearsal were about the chorus, but two extra practices inspired them with the necessary self-confidence, and the pieces from the Requiem were as well done as any of the others. The effect of the *Symphonie Funèbre* was the same as in Paris. The next morning, the military band who had played in it came in the greatest delight to serenade me, a proceeding that had the effect of disturbing my sorely needed slumbers, and obliging me to go down and drink some punch with them, though I was suffering from neuralgia in the head, as well as from my everlasting sore throat.

It was at this Dresden concert that I first noticed the predilection of the German public for my Requiem. We did not attack the larger pieces, such as the *Dies Iræ*, the *Lacrymosa*, etc., the chorus not being strong enough. The *Symphonie Fantastique* was not so well liked. I heard that the swell members of the audience, with the King and Court at their head, were not particularly attracted by the violence of its passion, the melancholy of its reverie, or the monstrous hallucinations of the *finale*. The *Bal* and *Scène aux Champs* alone found favour in their eyes. The public, properly so called was carried away by the musical current, and applauded the *Marche au Supplice* and the *Sabbat* more than any of the other numbers.

Still it was evident on the whole, that this composition, though well received at Stuttgart, perfectly

understood at Weimar, and discussed at Leipzig, was unsuited to the musical and poetical tastes of Dresden. The people were puzzled by its unlikeness to the symphonies with which they were familiar, and it astonished rather than pleased them.

The Dresden band, formerly directed by Morlacchi, the Italian, and by the illustrious composer of the *Freyschütz*, is now conducted by Reissiger and Richard Wagner. In Paris, we know scarcely anything of Reissiger's, except his slow melancholy waltz, known as *Dernière Pensée de Weber*. As for the young kapell-meister, Richard Wagner, who lived for some time in Paris without succeeding in making himself known, except by some articles in the *Gazette Musicale*, his authority was exercised for the first time in assisting me with my rehearsals, which he did with both zeal and good-will. The ceremony of his installation took place the day after my arrival; and when I met him he was in all the intoxication of a very natural delight. After having endured untold privations in France, and all the mortifications attendant on obscurity, Wagner, on his return to Saxony, had the boldness to undertake and the good fortune to carry out the composition of both words and music of an opera in five acts, *Rienzi*. It had a splendid success at Dresden, and was soon followed by the *Flying Dutchman*, an opera in three acts, of which he likewise wrote both words and music. Whatever opinion one may have about the merit of these works, it must be admitted that there are very few men capable of twice successfully accomplishing this double task.[1] It is a proof of capacity more than sufficient to attract both

[1] [Wagner has accomplished it many times since.]

attention and interest. The King of Saxony fully understood this, and on the day that he guaranteed Richard Wagner's position by associating him with his principal kapell-meister, the friends of art might have said to His Majesty what Jean Bart said to Louis XIV. when he informed that brave Jack-tar that he had promoted him: "Sire, you have done well!"

As *Rienzi* is far longer than most German operas, it is never represented in full.[1] The first two acts are played one evening, and the three last on the next. I saw only the second part, and hearing it but once, it was impossible to express a decided opinion about it. I only remember a beautiful prayer sung in the last act by *Rienzi* (Tichatchek) and a triumphal march modelled on the magnificent march in *Olympie*, though by no means an imitation of it. I was much struck by the sombre colouring of the *Flying Dutchman*, and by certain stormy effects engendered by the subject; but I also remarked an abuse of the *tremolo*, the more to be regretted that it had already struck me in *Rienzi*, and that it implied a certain indolence of mind in the author, against which he is not sufficiently on his guard. Of all orchestral effects the sustained *tremolo* is the most monotonous; and it calls for no inventive power on the part of the composer, unless accompanied by some striking idea either in the treble or bass. Be this as it may, however, one must, I repeat, honour the royal consideration that has, so to speak, rescued a young and most gifted artist by its active and unreserved patronage.

[1] [This barbarous proceeding, worthy of the times when the Paris Conservatoire cut Beethoven's Symphonies in half and played one half at the beginning and the other at the end of a concert, has been altered since the date of Berlioz's letter.]

The Dresden theatre left nothing undone that could possibly give *éclat* to the representations of both Wagner's works; the scenery, costumes, and *mise en scène* of *Rienzi* approaching very closely the best Paris style. Madame Devrient, of whom I shall have occasion to speak more fully with regard to her representations at Berlin, plays the part of a youth in *Rienzi;* a costume scarcely suited to the somewhat motherly outlines of her figure. She struck me as better suited to her part in the *Flying Dutchman*, in spite of certain affected poses and *spoken* interjections which she introduced throughout. But the talent that really impressed me as the most genuine was that of Wechter, who played the part of the doomed Dutchman. His baritone is one of the finest I have ever heard, and he uses it like a consummate singer. It is of that thrilling and impressive quality that has such a wonderful power of expression, provided the artist sings with soul and feeling, which Wechter does to a very high degree. Tichatchek is gracious, impassioned, brilliant, heroic, and entrancing in the *rôle* of Rienzi, in which his fine voice and large fiery eyes are of inestimable service. Mademoiselle Wiest represents the sister of Rienzi, with scarcely anything to do; this part the author has adapted exactly to the powers of the singer.

Now, my dear Ernst, I should like to tell you something about Lipinski, but I could not tell to *you*, a violinist admired and applauded throughout Europe—*you*, the studious and careful artist, anything you did not know already about the talent of your great predecessor. You know his exquisite tone, his touching and pathetic style, as well or better than I do, and long ago you committed his finest passages to your infallible memory. Besides, Lipinski was so kind during my stay

at Dresden, so warm-hearted and so devoted, that people would think my praises were by no means free from partiality, and would attribute them—though I may safely say quite wrongly—to gratitude rather than to genuine admiration. He was immensely applauded at my concert, in my violin romance, which had been played some days previously at Leipzig by David, and also in the viola solo of my *Harold* symphony.

This second evening was a greater success than the first; the melancholy and religious scenes in *Harold* evidently commanded all sympathies from the very first, and the movements from *Romeo and Juliet* (the *adagio* and the banquet scene) were equally successful. But that which touched the Dresden public and artists most deeply was the cantata of the *Cinq Mai*, admirably sung by Wechter and the chorus to a German translation, again kindly made for the occasion by the indefatigable Herr Winkler. The memory of Napoleon is now almost as dear to the Germans as to the French, which doubtless explains the profound impression always produced by the piece in every town where it was afterwards performed. The end especially often gave rise to singular manifestations:

> Loin de ce roc nous fuyons en silence,
> L'astre du jour abandonne les cieux.

At Dresden I made the acquaintance of the great English harpist, the Liszt of the harp, Parish-Alvars, whose name has not yet obtained the popularity it deserves. It is inconceivable what graceful and spirited effects he manages to produce with an instrument which is so limited in some respects—what original features, what unheard-of sounds! His fantasia on *Moïse*, the form of which has been so happily imitated on the piano

by Thalberg, his variations in harmonics on the Naiades' chorus in *Oberon*, and a score of similar pieces charmed me inexpressibly. The advantage which the new harps possess of being able, by means of the double action of the pedals, to strike two chords in unison, gave him the idea of combinations which seem absolutely impracticable on paper.

The only difficulty, however, consists in the ingenious use of the pedals, which produce the double notes known as *synonymes*. It is possible to play chords with astounding rapidity in four parts by intervals of minor thirds, because the harp-strings, instead of representing the ordinary diatonic scale of C flat, are enabled by the *synonymes* to give in their descending succession the series of C natural, C natural; A natural; G flat, G flat; E flat, E flat.

Parish-Alvars trained some good pupils during his stay at Vienna. He has just been playing at Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin, and in many other towns also, where his marvellous talent invariably excited enthusiasm. Why does he not come to Paris?

Among other eminent artists in the Dresden orchestra is Dotzauer, an excellent professor, leader of the violoncellos. There is a very good *cor anglais;* the first oboe has a fine tone, but an old-fashioned style, and an irritating mania for trills and mordents. He gave himself terrible liberties, more especially in the solo at the beginning of the *Scène aux Champs*. At the second rehearsal I expressed my detestation of these melodious tricks pretty sharply, and he abstained from them at the subsequent rehearsals; but this was only a feint, and on the day of the concert, the perfidious oboe, knowing that I could not stop the orchestra and address him in public, recommenced

his little villanies, giving me at the same time a cunning look that made me almost speechless with indignation.

The most remarkable of the horn players is M. Levy, who enjoys a great reputation in Saxony. He and his colleagues use the cylinder horn, to which the Leipzig band, unlike almost all the others in the north of Germany, has hitherto refused admission. The Dresden trumpets are likewise *à cylindre;* they might with advantage take the place of our cornets à piston, which are not known there.

The military band is very good—even the drummers are musicians; but the reeds did not strike me as irreproachable. Their tune left much to be desired, and the bandmasters of these regiments would do well to order their clarinets from Sax. Ophicleides there are none; the deep parts are sustained by Russian bassoons, serpents, and tubas.

I often thought of Weber when conducting this Dresden orchestra, which he led for so many years, when it was even more numerous than now. Weber had trained it so well that he would sometimes beat the first four bars in the *allegro* of the overture to the *Freyschütz*, and then allow the orchestra to go on alone to the pauses at the end. Musicians may well be proud when they see their chief fold his arms on such occasion.

Would you believe, my dear Ernst, that during the three weeks I spent in this musical town, no one ever told me that Weber's family were living in the place? I should have been so happy to make their acquaintance, and to express a little of my respectful admiration for the great composer who has made his name illustrious. . . . I did not know till too late that I had lost this precious opportunity, and I must here, at any rate, express my regret to Madame Weber and her children.

At Dresden I also saw some works by the celebrated Hasse, who for long ruled the destinies of the band. I found nothing very remarkable in them, except one *Te Deum*, composed for some glorious commemoration of the Saxon Court, which I thought as stately and splendid as a peal of grand bells. To those who are satisfied with powerful sonority, this *Te Deum* must be very fine; but sonority does not strike me as sufficient. What I should especially like to have heard really well performed would be some of the numerous operas which Hasse wrote for the Italian, German, and English[1] theatres, and on which his vast fame rests. Why not try to revive at least one of these at Dresden? It would be a curious experiment, perhaps even a resurrection. Hasse's life must have been very eventful; but except commonplace biographies, which repeated all that I knew and said nothing of what I wanted to know, I could find nothing. He travelled much, and lived long both in the torrid zone and the polar regions, that is to say, in Italy and in England. There must have been a curious romance in his relations with the Venetian Marcello, and his passion for Faustina, whom he married, and who used to sing the principal parts of his operas. There was often war between the composer and the cantatrice, in which the master was the slave, and the right was always wrong. Perhaps nothing of all this ever happened. Who knows?[2] Faustina may have been a very human *diva*, a modest cantatrice, a virtuous wife and a good musician, faithful to her husband and her part, telling her beads and knitting stockings when she had nothing else to do.

[1] [Hasse's only achievement in London was to put on the stage his opera of *Artaserse*, originally written for Venice.]

[2] [What a very characteristic passage! Compare vol. i. p. 210, note 2.]

Hasse wrote, Faustina sang; they earned a fortune which they did not spend. That is nothing nowadays; and if you ever marry it is what I should wish for you.

When I left Dresden to return to Leipzig, Lipinski, hearing that Mendelssohn was getting up the *finale* from *Romeo and Juliet* for the concert for the poor, announced his intention of going to hear it if he could get two or three days' leave from the intendant. I took this promise merely as a compliment; but judge of my vexation when I saw Lipinski turn up at the concert, and the *finale* could not be performed owing to the occurrence of which I told you in my last letter. He had travelled more than a hundred miles to hear it. There's a lover of music for you! But you, my dear Ernst, will not be astonished at this; I am sure you would do as much yourself. You are an artist. Farewell, farewell!

H. B.

CHAPTER LVII.

Brunswick—Hamburg.

Letter VI.—To Henri Heine.

I have had all sorts of good luck in this excellent town; and accordingly my first idea was to regale one of my intimate enemies with the following account of it, which would have given him pleasure, whereas it will probably vex you, my dear Heine. "Anti-moralists assert that *there is something disagreeable to our best friends in any happiness that befalls us;* but I don't believe it. It is an infamous calumny, and I can swear that the brilliant and unexpected fortunes of certain of my friends have not troubled me at all."

Enough! Let us not enter upon the thorny fields of irony, where wormwood and euphorbia flourish in the shade of the arborescent nettle, where vipers and toads hiss and croak, where the water of the lake seethes, the earth quakes, the night wind scorches, and silent lightning flashes from the western clouds. For what is the sense of biting one's lips, grinding one's teeth, rolling one's eyes in apparent agony, and playing bitter practical jokes on one's interlocutor, when one's thoughts, far from being bitter, are full of pleasant memories—when

one's heart is overflowing with gratitude and innocent delight, and one would gladly have a hundred voices to tell those dear to us that for one day at least we were happy? It was a little movement of puerile vanity that induced me to begin like this. I was unconsciously trying to imitate you, the inimitable ironist. It shall not happen again. In our conversation I have only too often regretted that I could never compel you to be serious, nor arrest the convulsive movement of your claws when you were strongly under the impression that you were making them into velvet paws, tiger-cat that you are, *Leo quærens quem devoret!*

And yet what feeling—what innocent imagination there is in your works! How well you can sing in the major key when you please! How impulsive is your enthusiasm whenever you are suddenly filled with admiration, and so forget yourself! What infinite tenderness breathes through the secret recesses of your heart for the country which you have so often satirised, the land fruitful in poets, the country of dreaming genius—that Germany, in fact, whom you call your old grandmother, and who loves you so well notwithstanding?

I could see this by the sadly tender way in which you were spoken of during my journey. Yes, she loves you! On you she has concentrated all her affections. Your great elder brothers are dead. She now counts only upon you, and with a smile calls you her naughty child. It is by her and by the deep romantic songs with which she cradled your first years, that you have been inspired with a pure and high feeling for music; but when you left her to wander through the world, suffering made you mocking and pitiless.

You could, I know, make a fine caricature of the

account I am about to give you of my journey to Brunswick, and yet see what confidence I have in your friendship, or how I have lost my fear of your irony, for I address it to you and no other! . . . Just as I was leaving Leipzig I received a letter from Meyerbeer, telling me that they could not attend to my concerts for another month. The great master recommended me to utilise this delay by going to Brunswick, where he said I should find a prize orchestra. I followed this advice, without guessing how much I should have to congratulate myself on doing so. I knew no one at Brunswick; I was completely ignorant both as to the feelings of the artists with regard to myself and as to the public taste. But the bare idea that the brothers Müller were at the head of the band was enough to inspire me with confidence, independently of the very encouraging opinion of Meyerbeer. I had heard them when they were last in Paris, and I regarded their performance of Beethoven's quartets as one of the most extraordinary prodigies of modern art.

The Müller family, in fact, represents the ideal of Beethoven's quartets, as the Bohrer family represents the ideal of the trio. Nowhere else in the world has the perfection of the whole, the unity of sentiment, depth of expression, purity of style, grandeur, force, spirit, and passion been carried to such a pitch. Such an interpretation of these sublime works gives us, I think, the most exact idea of Beethoven's thoughts and feelings while writing them. It is the echo of creative inspiration, the rebound of genius! Moreover, this musical Müller family is more numerous than I had thought; I counted seven artists of that name, brothers, sons, and nephews, in the Brunswick orchestra. George is the kapell-meister;

his elder brother, Charles, is only the first maître de concert, but by the deference with which his remarks are listened to, it is plain that he is looked upon as the leader of the famous quartet. The second concert-meister is M. Freudenthal, a violinist and meritorious composer. I had given notice of my arrival to Charles Müller, and on alighting from the stage at Brunswick I was accosted by a most amiable young man, M. Zinkeisen, one of the first violins in the orchestra, speaking French like you or me, who was waiting to take me to the kapell-meister the moment I arrived. This attention and cordiality seemed to me to augur favourably. M. Zinkeisen had sometimes seen me in Paris, and recognised me in spite of the pitiable condition to which I was reduced by the cold, for I had passed the night in an open *coupé* to escape the smell of six horrible smokers inside. I admire the police regulations in Germany; you are forbidden under penalty of a fine to smoke in the streets or public squares, where this amiable practice cannot inconvenience anybody; but wherever you go, to the café, the table d'hôte, or in the stage-coach, that infernal pipe pursues you. You are German, my dear Heine, and you do not smoke! Believe me, it is not the least of your merits; posterity may not take note of it, but among your contemporaries many men and all women will be grateful to you.

Charles Müller received me with that calm, serious manner that occasionally alarmed me in Germany, believing, as I did, that it meant coldness and indifference; nevertheless, there is less to fear from it than from the smiling demonstrations and pretty speeches with which we greet a stranger, and then forget him five minutes afterwards.

The concert-meister having ascertained my wishes respecting the composition of the orchestra, went off immediately to make arrangements with his brother for collecting the necessary strings, and appealing to such amateurs and artists as were fit to join it. The very next day they had formed a fine orchestra, somewhat larger than that of the Opéra in Paris, and composed of musicians who were not only skilled, but also animated by a rare zeal and ardour. The question of the harp, ophicleide, and *cor anglais* again presented itself, as it had already at Weimar, Leipzig, and Dresden.

I tell you all these details in order to give you the reputation of being a musician. One member of the orchestra, a M. Leibrock, an excellent artist, well versed in musical literature, had only studied the harp for a year, and was therefore a good deal alarmed at the test to which he was likely to be put by my second symphony. Besides, his harp was an old-fashioned thing, with pedals of simple action, which do not admit of the execution of modern music. Fortunately, the harp part of *Harold* is extremely easy, and M. Leibrock worked so hard for five or six days that he acquitted himself most honourably . . . at the general rehearsal. On the evening of the concert he was seized with a panic at the important moment; he stopped short in the introduction, and left Charles Müller, who was taking the tenor solo, to play alone.

This was our only mishap, and though the public never even perceived it, M. Leibrock reproached himself bitterly for some days, in spite of all my efforts to make him forget it.

There was no ophicleide of any sort at Brunswick; and to replace it I was offered first a bass tuba (a mag-

nificent deep instrument, of which I shall have occasion to speak in connection with the military bands of Berlin). The young man who played it did not, however, seem to me thoroughly master of the mechanism, not even knowing its full compass. Then a Russian bassoon, called by the performer a double-bassoon. I had much trouble in undeceiving him as to the nature and name of his instrument, which emits the sound just as it is written, and is played with a mouthpiece like the ophicleide; whilst the double-bassoon, a transposing reed instrument, is simply a large bassoon, reproducing almost the entire bassoon scale an octave lower.[1] Be that as it may, the Russian bassoon was adopted to replace the ophicleide after a fashion. There was no *cor anglais;* we arranged its solos for an oboe, and began the orchestra rehearsals whilst the choir practised in another room. I must say here that never to this day, in France, Belgium, or Germany, have I seen a body of artists who brought such devotion, attention, and ardour to their task. After the first rehearsal, when they were able to form some idea of the principal difficulties of my symphonies, the watchword was given for the following rehearsals. They agreed to cheat me as to the hour at which they were supposed by rights to begin, and every morning (I did not know this till afterwards) the orchestra assembled an hour before my arrival to practise the risky passages. Accordingly, I was each day more and more amazed at the rapid progress in the performance, and the impetuous assurance with which the whole body attacked difficulties that had long seemed formidable even to

[1] [This is the instrument which makes such fine effects in Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, Brahms's Haydn-Variations, etc.]

my Paris orchestra—that young guard of the grand army.[1]

The only piece that gave Charles Müller much difficulty was the *Queen Mab scherzo*, which, on the entreaty of M. Zinkeisen (who had heard it in Paris), I had ventured for the first time since I came to Germany to insert in the programme.

"We will work so hard," he had said to me, "that we shall manage it." He did not overrate the powers of the orchestra, and Queen Mab in her microscopic car, attended by the buzzing insect of a summer's night, and launched at full gallop by her tiny horses, fully displayed to the Brunswick public her lively drollery and caprices. But you will understand my anxiety on this subject; for you, the poet of fairies and elves, the own brother of those graceful and malicious little creatures, know only too well with what slender thread their veil of gauze is woven, and how serene must be the sky beneath which their many-coloured tints sport freely in the pale starlight.

Well, in spite of our fears, the orchestra identified itself completely with Shakespeare's fascinating fancy, and became so tiny, agile, minute, and soft, that I do not think the fairy queen ever went more harmoniously.

In the *finale* of *Harold*, on the contrary, that furious orgy where wine, blood, joy, rage, all combined, parade their intoxication—where the rhythm sometimes seems to stumble along prostrate, sometimes to rush on in fury, and the mouths of the trumpets and trombones seem to vomit forth curses and to answer prayer with

[1] [To anyone who knows Berlioz's orchestral music, what a curious picture does this present of the imperfect capabilities of fine orchestras fifty years ago.]

blasphemies; where they laugh, drink, fight, break, slay, violate, and utterly run riot; in this brigand scene the orchestra became a regular pandemonium; there was something positively supernatural and terrifying in its frantic life and spirit, and violins, basses, trombones, drums, and cymbals, all sang and bounded and roared with diabolical order and concord, whilst from the solo tenor, the dreamy Harold, some trembling notes of his evening hymn were still heard in the distance as he fled in terror.

How my heart and my frame shuddered as I conducted that marvellous orchestra, in which I seemed to find my young Paris heroes more hot-blooded than ever. You know nothing like this, you poets; you are never carried away by such hurricanes![1] I would willingly have embraced the whole orchestra; but all I could do was to exclaim—in French, it is true, but the mere tone must have made them understand me—"Sublime! Gentlemen, you have my thanks and admiration; you are perfect brigands!"

The performance of the overture to *Benvenuto* was equally spirited; and yet, the Introduction to *Harold*, the *Pilgrims' March*, and the *Serenade*, in a totally opposite style, were never played with more calm grandeur and religious serenity. As for the piece from *Romeo* (*The Feast at the Capulets'*), its characteristics are also of the whirlwind sort, and fairly carried one away.

You should have seen the excited look of the band in

[1] [That is true; poetry, even at its highest, knows nothing of the rapture and tumult that are excited in the heart by such music as the first movements of Beethoven's Third, Fifth, and Seventh Symphonies, the *finale* of his Seventh and Eighth, his great *Leonora* overture, Schumann's *Manfred*, or Schubert's B minor and C major Symphonies.]

the intervals between the practices. . . . Schmidt (an astounding double-bass) tore the skin off the forefinger of his right hand at the beginning of the *pizzicato* passage of the *Orgie;* but he went on, not thinking of stopping for such a trifle, or caring for its bleeding, merely contenting himself with changing the finger.

While we were abandoning ourselves to these delights, the choir on its side was also working diligently at the pieces from the Requiem, but with different results. The *Offertoire* and *Quærens me* went tolerably, but there was an insurmountable obstacle to the *Sanctus*, namely, the solo which was to be sung by Schmetzer, the first tenor in the theatre and a first-rate musician. The *andante* of this piece, written for three women's voices, presents certain enharmonic modulations which the fair Dresden singers had understood perfectly, but which were apparently quite beyond the musical comprehension of those at Brunswick. Having tried in vain for three days to grasp its meaning and intonation, these poor disheartened wretches sent a deputation to implore me not to expose them to such a public humiliation, and to strike the dreadful *Sanctus* out of the bills. I consented, but with great reluctance, especially on account of Schmetzer, whose high tenor exactly suits this seraphic hymn, and who, moreover, was delighting in the idea of singing it. All was now ready, and in spite of Charles Müller's terror about the *scherzo*, which he wished to practise once more, we were about to study at the concert the impressions produced by my music. I had invited some twenty of the chief Brunswick amateurs to the rehearsals. Well, each day they acted as a living advertisement, exciting the curiosity of the public to the highest degree, until the

interest even of the common people in the preparations for the concert, and their curiosity about it, rose to the highest pitch. "What happened at the rehearsal this morning? . . . Is he pleased? . . . He is a Frenchman, is he? . . . But surely the French only compose comic operas? . . . The singers think him very cross! . . . Did he really say the women sang like ballet-dancers? Then he knew that the sopranos of the chorus belong to the ballet corps? . . . Is it true that he took off his hat to the trombones in the middle of a piece? . . . The orchestra attendant says he drank two bottles of water, one of wine, and three glasses of brandy at the rehearsal yesterday. . . . But why is he always saying, 'César! César!' (*'C'est ça, c'est ça!'*) to the maître de concert?" etc., etc.

Long before the appointed hour, however, the theatre was filled to overflowing by an impatient crowd already prepossessed in my favour. Now, my dear Heine, draw in your claws, for at this point you might be tempted to make me feel them. When the hour had come and the orchestra was seated, I entered, and crossing the ranks of the violins, approached the conductor's desk. Judge of my terror when I saw it entirely covered by a huge garland of leaves.

"This is the musicians' doing," I said to myself, "and they will have compromised me. How imprudent! To sell the bear's skin before they have killed the bear! And a nice mess I shall be in if the public are not of their opinion! Such a manifestation would be enough to ruin an artist in Paris." The overture, however, was received with great acclamations, the *Pilgrims' March* was encored, the *Orgie* put the whole room in a fever, the

devout were evidently deeply moved by the *Offertoire*, with its chorus on two notes, and the *Quærens me*. Charles Müller was greatly applauded in the violin romance; *Queen Mab* created quite a sensation; a song with the orchestra was encored; and the *Feast at Capulets' House* formed a glowing *finale* to the evening. Scarcely had the last chord been struck when a terrible noise shook the entire room, the whole public *en masse* hallooing (from pit, boxes—everywhere else); the trumpets, horns, and trombones of the orchestra, some in one key and some in another, made the most discordant fanfares, accompanied by all the fracas that it was possible for bows to make. This singular mode of applauding is called, in German, *Tusch*. On hearing it thus unexpectedly, my first feelings were anger and disgust, they were spoiling the musical effect I had just produced, and I almost felt a grudge against the artists for testifying their satisfaction by such a hubbub. But it was impossible not to be deeply moved by their homage when the kapell-meister, George Müller, came forward laden with flowers, and said in French: "Permit me, sir, to offer you these wreaths in the name of the ducal band, and allow me to crown your works!"

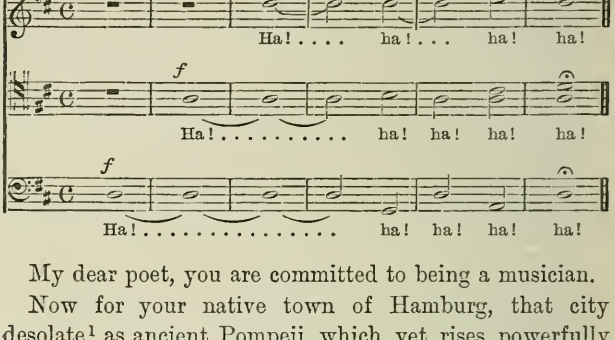
At these words the public redoubled its applause, the orchestra recommenced its fanfares . . . the baton fell from my hand, and I was no longer aware of what was going on.

Scarcely had I left the theatre, in a perspiration as though I had just been dipped in the Styx, and in such a bewildered state of delight that I hardly knew what was being said, when I was informed that a supper of one hundred and fifty covers had been ordered at my

hotel, to which I was invited by a society of artists and amateurs. I was, of course, obliged to go. Fresh applause, fresh acclamations on my arrival; toasts and speeches in German and French succeeded each other. I replied as well as I could to such as I understood; and as each health was drunk, a hundred and fifty voices replied by a hurrah in chorus, the effect of which was most beautiful. The basses began first on D, the tenors came in on the A, and the ladies on the F sharp, thus making the chord of D major, followed immediately by the four chords of the sub-dominant, tonic, dominant, and tonic, the connection of which thus forms a cadence plagal and a perfect cadence in succession. This fine round of harmony burst forth with pomp and majesty in its grand movement; and, at any rate, is truly worthy of a musical people.

What shall I say to you, my dear Heine? Though you may think me *naïf* and primitive in the extreme, I must confess that all these kindly manifestations and sympathetic acclamations made me superlatively happy. Doubtless this happiness does not even approach to what the composer feels when conducting a magnificent orchestra in the inspired performance of one of his beloved works; but the two go very well together, and after such a concert, an evening like this spoils nothing. I thus owe a great deal to the artists and amateurs of Brunswick, as I do also to its chief musical critic, M. Robert Griepenkerl, who engaged in vehement polemics with a Leipzig paper in a learned pamphlet about me, and gave a very correct idea, I think, of the force and direction of the musical current that carries me away.

So give me your hand and let us sing a grand hurrah for Brunswick on its favourite chords.



My dear poet, you are committed to being a musician.

Now for your native town of Hamburg, that city desolate[1] as ancient Pompeii, which yet rises powerfully from its own ashes, and bravely stanches its wounds! . . . Certainly, I have only praises to bestow upon it, for it has grand musical resources; singing societies, philharmonic societies, military bands, etc. True, the orchestra of the theatre has been reduced, for economy's sake, to very mediocre proportions; but I had made my terms with the manager beforehand, and the orchestra to which I was introduced was quite beautiful both in numbers and talent, thanks to a valuable addition of strings, and to the leave of absence I procured for two or three aged players, to whom the theatre was devoted. One strange thing I must mention: there is an excellent harpist with a very good instrument! I had begun to despair of finding either the one or the other in Germany. I also found a vigorous ophicleide, but had to dispense with a *cor anglais*.

[1] [Hamburg had just been burnt to the ground.]

The first flute (Cantal) and the first violin (Lindenau) are two virtuosi of the highest order. The kapell-meister (Krebs)[1] fulfils his functions with talent and a strictness that is excellent in a conductor. He helped me with great good nature during our long rehearsals. The singing *troupe* of the theatre was pretty well organised; it possessed three meritorious artists, a tenor who, if not gifted with an exceptional voice, had both taste and method; a clever soprano whose name I have forgotten (the young *diva* would have actually done me the honour to sing at my concert if I had been better known—Hosanna in excelsis!); and lastly, Reichel, the formidable bass, with his enormous voice of two octaves and a half! Reichel is a superb-looking man, and represents such characters as Zarastro, Moses, and Bertram, to perfection. Madame Cornet, the wife of the manager, a finished musician, with a most striking soprano of unusual compass, was only engaged to appear in a limited number of representations. I applauded her highly as the Queen of the Night in the *Flûte Enchantée*. The chorus was small and not strong, but got through its part very decently. The house is very large: I rather dreaded its size, having found it empty at three different representations of the *Flûte Enchantée*, *Moïse*, and *Linda di Chamouni*. Accordingly, I was most agreeably surprised the day I presented myself before the Hamburg public.

An excellent performance, a numerous, intelligent, and

[1] [Karl August Krebs, father of Marie Krebs, the pianist, so well known in England. Krebs's removal from the conductorship of the Court Theatre at Vienna to Hamburg, in the autumn of 1826, gave Schubert an opportunity of succeeding him, which, however, he failed to take advantage of. See *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, iii. p. 345.]

zealous audience, made this one of the best concerts I ever gave in Germany. *Harold* and the cantata of the *Cinq Mai*, sung with great feeling by Reichel, carried off the honours. After this piece, two musicians close to my desk touched me deeply by these simple words, spoken under their breath, in French: "Ah, monsieur, notre respect, notre respect!" It was all the French they could muster.

In a word, the Hamburg orchestra has ever been my firm friend, and I assure you I am not a little proud of it. Krebs alone displayed a curious reticence in his opinion. "My dear fellow," he said to me, "in a few years your music will be known all over Germany. It will become popular, and that will be a great misfortune! What imitations it will provoke, what a style, what absurdities! It would be better for art that you had never been born." Still, let us hope that these poor symphonies are not so *contagious* as this implied, and that they will breed neither yellow fever nor cholera morbus!

Now Heine, Henry Heine, famous banker of ideas, nephew of Mr. Solomon Heine, author of so many precious poems in ingots, I have no more to say to you, and I . . . salute you.

H. B.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Berlin.

Letter VII.—To Mdlle. Louise Bertin.

I must first of all implore your indulgence, mademoiselle, for the letter I am taking the liberty to write to you; I have but too much to fear from my present state of mind. A fit of black philosophy attacked me some days ago, and God knows to what gloomy notions, or absurd judgments, or strange stories it will impel me . . . if it lasts. You do not, perhaps, know exactly what black philosophy is? It is the contrary of natural magic—neither more nor less.

By natural magic one divines that Victor Hugo is a great poet; that Beethoven was a great musician; that you are at once musician and poetess; that Janin is a man of intellect; that if a fine and well-performed opera fails, the public does not understand it; that if it succeeds, the public does not understand it either; that the beautiful is rare; that the rare is not always beautiful; that might is right; that Abd-el-Kader is wrong, and O'Connell also; that the Arabs are decidedly not Frenchmen; that peaceful agitation is stupidity;—and other problems equally intricate.

By black philosophy one is reduced to doubt and

wonder at everything, to see all gracious images on the wrong side, and all hideous things in their naked significance; to murmur without ceasing, to blaspheme life, and curse death. Like Hamlet, one is indignant that

> Imperial Cæsar, dead, and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

One would be still more indignant if the ashes of the poor only were put to this ignoble use. One pities "poor Yorick" for not being able to laugh at the senseless grimace he makes after his fifteen years underground, and yet one throws down his skull with horror and disgust, or else one makes it into a drinking-cup, and poor Yorick, who can drink no more, serves to stanch the thirst of the topers who jeer at him.

Thus, in the solitude of the Roches, where you are peaceably indulging your own thoughts, I should only experience mortal weariness and discontent while a prey to this black philosophy.

Yesterday, mademoiselle, while in this condition, I happened to be in a house where they have a mania for autographs. The lady of the house did not fail to ask me to write something in her album. "But, I beg of you," she added, "no commonplaces." This injunction irritated me, and I immediately wrote:

"*The penalty of death is a great misfortune, for, if it did not exist, I should probably have murdered a great many people, and we should now have fewer of those begging idiots who are the plague of art and artists.*"

They laughed a good deal at my aphorism, thinking that I did not mean a word of it.

If you called on me to admire a fine sunset, I should probably prefer the gaslights of the Avenue des Champs

Élysées; if you pointed out your graceful swans on the lake, I should say, "The swan is an idiotic animal; it thinks of nothing but dabbling and eating, its only 'song' is a stupid and horrible rattle." If you were to go to the piano and play something from your favourite authors, Mozart and Cimarosa, I should probably interrupt you in a pet, saying that it was really time to have done with this admiration for Mozart, whose operas were all exactly alike, and whose *sang-froid* provokes and wearies me. . . . As for Cimarosa, I should pitch to the devil his unique and everlasting *Matrimonio Segreto*, which is nearly as tiresome as the *Mariage de Figaro*, without being anything like so musical; I should prove that the comedy of the work resided entirely in the interpolations of the actors; that its melody was extremely limited, that the perpetually recurring perfect cadence took up at least two-thirds of the score; in fact, that it is an opera only for carnivals and fairs. And if, to take an example in the opposite style, you were to produce one of Sebastian Bach's works, I should probably take flight at the sight of one of his fugues and leave you alone with his *Passion*. You see the consequences of this terrible malady! When possessed by it you have neither courtesy, nor *savoir vivre*, prudence, policy, tact, nor good sense; you say all sorts of enormities, and what is worse, you mean what you say, commit yourself, lose your head.

A plague, then, upon black philosophy! The attack is past. I am now sober enough to speak reasonably, and tell you what I have seen and heard at Berlin; afterwards I shall speak of my own performances.

To begin with the lyrical theatre.

The late German opera-house, which was burnt down

scarcely three months ago, was rather dark and not over clean, but very sonorous and well suited for musical effects. The orchestra was not so near the audience as in Paris; it extended further on both sides, and the noisy instruments—trombones, trumpets, and drums—were somewhat screened by the first boxes, and thus lost some of their excessive force. The band—one of the best I ever heard—was composed as follows for great performances: 14 first and 14 second violins, 8 violas, 10 cellos, 8 double-basses, 4 flutes, 4 oboes, 4 clarinets, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 1 kettle-drum, 1 big drum, a pair of cymbals, and 2 harps. The stringed instruments are almost all first-rate; at their head I must specify the brothers Ganz (first violin and first alto of the highest merit), and the clever violinist, Ries. The wood-wind is also very good, and double that at the Paris Opéra—a great advantage, since it allows two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, and two bassoons to come in as *ripieni* in the *fortissimo*, and greatly softens the harshness of the brass, which would otherwise be too prominent. The horns are very powerful, and all *à cylindre*, to the great regret of Meyerbeer, who still retains the same opinion of the new mechanism which I held myself till quite lately. Several composers object to the horn *à cylindre* because they do not think its tone equal to that of the simple one. I have made the experiment several times with the open notes, and I confess I found it impossible to discover the least difference in tone or sonority between the two. Another objection, apparently better founded, has also been made to the new horn, but it can easily be overcome. Since this instrument (which to my mind is improved) has been introduced into our orchestras, some players, while employing the cylinders

for the ordinary horn part, find it more convenient with this mechanism to produce the *stopped* notes (so intended by the composer) as *open* sounds. This is, no doubt, a great mistake; but it is one for which the performer is to be blamed and not the instrument. The cylinder horn in the hands of a clever artist can produce not only the closed sounds of the ordinary horn, but even the entire scale without employing a single open note. The only conclusion from all this is that horn players ought to be able to use their hands in the bells as if the cylinders did not exist, and that composers from henceforth should mark stopped notes by some sign, the performer only producing open sounds where there is no mark.

The same prejudice has opposed the use of the cylinder trumpets, now so common in Germany, but with even less reason than in the case of the horn. No composer ever uses stopped sounds for the trumpet, and the question is, therefore, naturally one of no moment. The only reasonable complaint was that the trumpet lost much of its brilliancy of tone by the cylinders, but this is not the case, at least to my ear. Well, if a finer ear than mine is wanted to detect a difference between the two instruments, I trust it will be admitted that the inconvenience of the cylinder trumpet is not to be compared with the advantage of being able to go up and down a chromatic scale two octaves and a half in compass, without difficulty and without the slightest inequality of tone. To my mind, therefore, the Germans have done well to abandon the use of the simple trumpet almost entirely. In France we have still very few chromatic (or cylinder) trumpets, the incredible popularity of the cornet à pistons having so far carried off the palm—wrongly,

as I think. The tone of the cornet is far from being so full or brilliant as that of the trumpet. At any rate we have no lack of instruments. Adolphe Sax now makes cylinder trumpets in all sizes and in all possible keys, used and disused, the perfection and sonority of which are undeniable. And yet, will it be believed that this ingenious young artist has all the trouble in the world in making his way and maintaining himself in Paris? Persecutions worthy of the Middle Ages are brought against him, exactly realising the sayings and doings of Benvenuto Cellini. His workmen are enticed away, his designs stolen, he is accused of madness, and driven to litigation. A trifle more, and they would assassinate him. Such is the hatred that inventors always excite amongst those of their rivals who can invent nothing for themselves. It is the duty of the Minister of War to place so useful and so gifted a man in the position to which his talent, his perseverance, and efforts entitle him. Our military bands have as yet neither cylinder trumpets nor bass tubas. These instruments will be absolutely necessary if the French military orchestras are to reach the same level as those of Prussia and Austria. An order for three hundred trumpets and a hundred bass tubas, sent to Adolphe Sax by the Government, would save him.

Berlin is the only German town where I found a deep bass trombone (in B flat). We have none in Paris, the performers there declining the practice of an instrument which tires their chests. Apparently, the Prussian lungs are more robust than ours. The orchestra of the Berlin Opera possesses two of these instruments, the sonority of which is such as completely to destroy the tone of the alto and tenor. The tone of a bass trombone would be

enough to destroy the balance and ruin the harmony of the three trombone parts as written by most composers nowadays. Well, at the Berlin Opera there is no ophicleide, and instead of replacing it by a bass tuba in the French operas, which nearly all contain an ophicleide part, they imagined that they could have this part played by a second bass trombone; but the result of combining these two terrible instruments is most disastrous. The deep tone of the brass so predominates, that it is as much as even the trumpet can do to make itself heard. In my own concerts, at which, however, I only employed one bass trombone (for the symphonies), I noticed this, and was, therefore, obliged to beg the artist who played it to sit so as to turn the mouth of the instrument towards the desk, which thus served as a sort of sordine, whilst the other trombones played standing, with their mouths above the desk. In this way alone could the three parts be heard. Repeated observations at Berlin led me to think that the best way of grouping the trombones in the theatres is, after all, that adopted at the Paris Opéra, where three tenor trombones are employed. The alto one is so shrill that its high notes are of little use, and I should be inclined to vote for its exclusion from theatres, and to allow the presence of a bass trombone, only if the music were in four parts, and there were three tenors capable of holding their own against it.

My speech may not be golden, but at any rate there is plenty of brass in it. I am sure, however, that these details about instrumentation will interest you, mademoiselle, far more than my misanthropic tirades and bad jokes about death's heads. Though both a melodist and a harmonist, you are but little versed in

osteology—at least as far as I know. I therefore resume the examination of the musical powers of the Berlin Opera.

The kettle-drummer is a good musician, but his wrists are not supple nor his rolls sufficiently firm; his kettle-drums also are too small, and have too little tone, and he is only acquainted with one sort of drumstick, which occupies a middle place between the ordinary leather heads and those with sponge. In this respect the Germans are far behind the French. Even as regards execution—with the exception of Wiprecht, the conductor of the military band at Berlin, who plays the kettle-drums like a clap of thunder—I have not met one player who for precision, rapidity of roll, and delicacy of *nuance*, can compare with Poussard, our excellent artist of the Opéra.

Am I to tell you anything about cymbals? All I can say is, that you rarely find a pair of cymbals intact, that is to say, neither cracked nor chipped; neither at Weimar, nor Leipzig, nor Dresden, nor Hamburg, nor Berlin was I so fortunate. This was always a subject of great wrath with me, and I have sometimes kept the orchestra waiting half an hour, and refused to begin a rehearsal until they had brought me two perfectly new cymbals, as vibrating and as Turkish as I desired, to prove to the kapell-meister that I was not wrong in regarding the broken fragments presented to me under that name, as both absurd and detestable. It must be admitted that the inferiority of certain parts of the German orchestras is quite disgraceful. The instruments are poor, and the performers are far from knowing all that can be got out of them: I speak of the kettle-drums, the cymbals, the big drum, the *cor anglais*, the

ophicleide, and the harp. But this defect is evidently due to the style of certain composers, who attach so little importance to these instruments that their successors are unable to get anything out of them.

But, on the other hand, the Germans are greatly superior to us in their brass in general, and their trumpets in particular. We have not an idea of these. Their clarinets are also better; as to oboes, I think the two countries are about on a par. In flutes we beat them, for the flute is nowhere played as it is in Paris. Their double-basses are more powerful than ours; their cellos, altos, and violins have grand qualities; but still, you could hardly without injustice put them on the same level with the unrivalled violins, altos, and cellos of our Conservatoire.

I have given abundant proofs of the scarcity of good harps in Germany; those of Berlin are no exception to the rule, and in that capital there is great room for some pupils of Parish-Alvars. This magnificent orchestra, which is famous for its precision, force, and delicacy, is under the command of Meyerbeer, director-general of the King of Prussia's musicians—you know him I think; of Hennig (first kapell-meister), a clever man, and highly esteemed; and of Taubert (second kapell-meister), a pianist and brilliant composer. I heard one of his piano trios performed by himself and the brothers Ganz, and found it an excellent work, in a new style and full of fire. His choruses to the Greek tragedy, *Medea*, have just been successfully produced at Berlin. Messrs. Ganz and Ries share the title and functions of leader.

Now let us go upon the stage.

On ordinary occasions the chorus contains but sixty voices; but when grand operas are performed before the

King, it is doubled in numbers. All these voices are excellent, fresh, and sonorous; most of the chorus, men, women, and children, are musicians—not such clever readers as those of our Opéra, but far better trained in the art of singing, more attentive and careful, and better paid. It is the finest theatrical chorus I have yet come across. Its director is Elssler, brother to the celebrated ballet-dancer,[1] a patient and intelligent artist. He might save himself much trouble and accelerate the choir practices considerably if, instead of training all the hundred and twenty in one room, he were to divide them into three groups, in three different rooms, under three sub-leaders, superintended by himself. This analytical method, which is absolutely rejected by the theatres for miserable reasons of economy and routine, is, however, the only one that admits of the thorough study of each chorus part, and of its careful and well-accentuated performance. I have said this often, and shall never tire of repeating it.

The actor-singers of the Berlin Theatre do not occupy so high a place among European musicians as do the choir and orchestra. There is much talent among them, however, more especially in the following:

Mdlle. Marx, an expressive and very sympathetic soprano, whose extreme notes, both low and high, are unhappily already beginning to show signs of wear.

Mdlle. Tutchek, a soprano, with a tolerably pure and flexible *timbre*.

Mdlle. Hähnel, a very well-marked contralto.

Boeticher, an excellent bass, with a grand compass and fine tone, a clever singer, fine actor, consummate musician and reader.

[1] [The children of Haydn's copyist.]

Zsische, a harmonious bass, with real talent and a voice and method calculated to shine rather in the concert-room than at the theatre.

Mantius,[1] first tenor, voice somewhat wanting in flexibility and not very large in compass.

Madame Schroeder-Devrient, only recently engaged, a soprano somewhat touched in the upper notes, but still brilliant and dramatic. When Madame Devrient cannot force her notes, she now sings flat. Her ornamentation is in very bad taste, and she intersperses spoken phrases and interjections with her singing, like our vaudeville actors in their couplets, the effect of which is execrable.[2] Her school of singing is most anti-musical and trivial, and beginners ought to be warned against imitating it.

I hear that Pischek, the excellent baritone, whom I spoke of in connection with Frankfort, has been just engaged by Meyerbeer.

This, mademoiselle, is all I can tell you of the dramatic and musical resources of the capital of Prussia. I did not attend one single performance at the Italian Theatre, and so abstain from speaking of it.

In another letter, and before giving any account of my own concerts, I shall have to call up my recollections of the representations of the *Huguenots* and *Armida*, of the Singing Academy and military bands—most important institutions, though essentially opposite in character, and so magnificent in comparison with anything of ours in the same style, that our national self-love ought to be deeply humiliated.

H. B.

[1] [Mendelssohn's friend, for whom he wrote his *Ave Maria*, for Tenor solo and eight-part chorus, Op. 23.]

[2] [See page 106, etc.]

CHAPTER LIX.

Berlin.

Letter VIII.—To Monsieur Habeneck.

I was lately giving Mdlle. Louise Bertin, whose musical science and serious love of art are no strangers to you, an account of the vocal and instrumental resources of the Grand Opera at Berlin. I shall now proceed to tell you of the Singing Academy and the military music of the place; but since you specially wish to know my opinion of such opera performances as I attended, I will reverse the order of my narrative, and give you an account of the Prussian artists in the operas of Meyerbeer, Gluck, Mozart, and Weber. In Berlin, as in Paris and indeed everywhere else, there are, unhappily, certain days when it would seem that a tacit understanding between the artists and the public sanctions more or less carelessness in the performance.[1] Many empty places are then visible in the theatre, and many vacant desks in the orchestra. On such evenings the leaders dine out, give balls, are out hunting, etc. The musicians are asleep, though playing the *notes* of their parts; some do not even

[1] [This state of things is the *raison d'être* of Berlioz's amusing book, *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre*.]

play at all, but sleep, read, draw caricatures, play foolish jokes on their neighbours, and quite loudly.

As for the actors, they are too much *en évidence* to allow themselves such liberties, though even that sometimes happens; but the chorus-singers indulge themselves to their hearts' content. They straggle in one after the other, a few at a time; many have arrived late at the theatre and are not yet dressed, and some having had a fatiguing service at church during the day are quite worn out when they make their appearance, and fully determined beforehand not to sing a note. Each takes his ease, the high notes are transposed an octave lower, or given *sotto voce;* there are no *nuances;* the *mezzo-forte* is adopted throughout the evening, no one looks at the baton, and the result is three or four false entries and as many disjointed phrases; but what does it signify? Does the public take any notice? The director knows nothing about it, and if the composer complains he is laughed at openly as a mischief-maker. The ladies in particular amuse themselves in a charming manner by exchanging smiles and signals with the musicians in the orchestra or the *habitués* of the balcony. In the morning they were at the christening of the child of Mademoiselle X., and have brought back *bon-bons*, which they eat on the stage, laughing all the time at the grotesque appearance of the godfather, the coquetry of the godmother, or the delighted countenance of the *curé*. As they chat they thump the children in the chorus, who are behaving rather too noisily.

"Have done, you mischievous child, or I will call the master."

"My dear, just look at the lovely rose in M——'s button-hole; it was Florence who gave it him."

"Is she still mad about her *agent de change?*"

"Yes; but it is a secret. Everyone cannot have *solicitors.*"

"Oh, what a good pun! By-the-way, are you going to the state concert?"

"No. I have an engagement that day."

"What is it?"

"I am going to be married."

"What an idea!"

"Take care! there is the curtain!"

The act is thus finished; the public mystified; and the work spoilt! But what then? One must take a little rest; one cannot always be on one's best behaviour; and these disorderly, slovenly representations serve to set off those that are done with care, zeal, attention, and talent. I admit this, but still there is something sad in seeing the great masterpieces treated with a familiarity likely to breed contempt. I admit that one cannot burn incense day and night before the statues of great men; but who could bear to see the bust of Gluck or of Beethoven employed as a barber's block? . . .

Do not philosophise. I am certain it would make you indignant. I do not wish you to conclude from all this that in the Berlin Opera these frolics are of very frequent occurrence. No, they go to work with moderation; in this, as in other respects, the palm remains with us. A masterpiece may be represented in Paris in the utterly disorderly manner that I have just described, but in Prussia it would only be permissible to give it in slight undress. I saw *Figaro* and the *Freyschütz* played in this manner. It was not bad; neither was it very good. There was a certain slackness over the whole; vagueness, rather than precision; moderation, instead of *verve*;

warmth, instead of fire. The colour and animation which betoken life, and that luxury which is so essential to good music, were altogether wanting; as well as something still more essential, namely, inspiration.

But at the performance of *Armide* and the *Huguenots* the transformation was complete; I could have believed myself to be at one of those "first nights" in Paris, where you come early in order to see a little of the performers and make your final suggestions; where each is at his post beforehand; where the minds of all are on the stretch, where every face wears a grave, intelligent, attentive look; where, in a word, you can see that a musical event of some importance is looming.

In the great orchestra not a desk was empty—strings or double-wind; the chorus were there to the last of the one hundred and twenty, and Meyerbeer was in the conductor's seat. I was very anxious to see him conduct, especially his own work. He acquitted himself as though he had been at it for twenty years; the orchestra is in his grasp, he does what he likes with it. As for the time at which he takes the music, it is the same as your own, with the exception of the entry of the monks in the fourth act, and in the march at the end of the third, which were a little slower. In the first case this difference produced a slightly chilling effect; but in the second (played on the stage by the military band) the result was a great improvement in every respect.

I cannot analyse the orchestral performance in Meyerbeer's *chef d'œuvre* scene by scene; enough to say that the whole representation was magnificent, beautiful, perfect in *nuance* throughout, and with incomparable clearness and precision even in the most intricate passages. The *finale* of the second act, with its passages based on

the series of chords of the diminished seventh, and its enharmonic modulations, was given with extreme clearness and an absolute perfection of intonation. The same for the choir. The vocalised passages, the double choruses, the answers in imitation, the sudden transition from loud to soft, the intermediate gradations—all these were clearly and vigorously executed with a rare warmth, and a still rarer feeling of true expression. The *stretto* of the Consecration of the poignards struck me like a thunderclap, and it was long before I recovered from the shock. The grand ensemble of the *Pré aux Clercs*, the dispute of the women, the litanies of the Virgin, the song of the Huguenot soldiers—formed a musical tissue of marvellous richness, so clearly given that every thread could be followed distinctly. This miracle of dramatised counterpoint remains in my recollection as a perfect marvel of choral execution. I do not think that Meyerbeer can hope to hear a better anywhere else in Europe. It must be added that the *mise en scène* is most ingeniously arranged. In the *rataplan* song the chorus imitate a kind of tambour march, thereby greatly enlivening the scene and increasing the effect of the music.

The military band, instead of being placed, as in Paris, at the back of the theatre, separated from the orchestra by the entire depth of the stage, and out of sight of the conductor, commences playing in the front side-scenes to the right, then begins to march, and gradually passes through the theatre close to the footlights, and through the groups of the chorus. Thus the musicians remain close to the conductor almost to the end of the piece, they keep the same strict time as the orchestra, and there is never the slightest rhythmical discordance between the two bodies.

Boeticher is an excellent Saint-Bris, and Zsische a fairly good Marcel, without, however, possessing any of that dramatic *humour* which makes our Levasseur so true and original in the part. Mademoiselle Marx shows sensibility and modest dignity, qualities essential for Valentine. I must, nevertheless, reproach her with two or three spoken monosyllables which she was weak enough to borrow from the school of Madame Devrient. I saw the latter in the same part some days later, and if my open opposition to her manner of playing shocked some good judges who, probably from habit, admire the celebrated artist unreservedly, I am bound to state why my opinion differs so entirely from theirs. I had formed no judgment and contracted no prejudice either for or against Madame Devrient. I only remember that at Paris many years ago I thought her admirable in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, while quite recently in Dresden, on the contrary, I had noticed certain very bad habits in her singing, and much affectation and exaggeration in her stage action. These defects were all the more obvious in the *Huguenots* because the situations are so thrilling and the music so stamped with grandeur and truth. Accordingly I blamed her severely, both as singer and actress, and for this reason: in the conspiracy scene, where Saint-Bris unfolds to Nevers and his friends his plan for the massacre of the Huguenots, Valentine listens to her father's bloody projects with a shudder, but takes care not to allow it to be seen. Indeed, Saint-Bris is not the man to suffer such opinions in his daughter. Valentine's involuntary spring towards her husband, when the latter breaks his sword and refuses to join the conspiracy, is all the finer that the timid woman has long suffered in silence, and her trouble has been so painfully concealed. Well, instead of masking her agita-

tion and remaining almost passive, like other sensible tragedians in this scene, Madame Devrient approaches Nevers, forces him to follow her to the end of the stage, and there, striding along beside him, appears to dictate to him both his line of conduct and his reply to Saint-Bris. Hence it follows that the exclamation of Valentine's husband,

Parmi mes illustres aïeux
Je compte des soldats, mais pas un assassin,

loses the whole force of its opposition; there is no spontaneity in his movement, and he only looks like a submissive husband repeating the lesson which his wife has taught him. When Saint-Bris sings the famous theme, "À cette cause sainte," Madame Devrient so entirely forgets herself as to throw herself into the arms of her father, who is supposed all the while to know nothing of Valentine's feelings. She beseeches, she implores, in fact, she torments him by so vehement a pantomime that Boeticher, who at first was evidently not prepared for these ill-timed transports, could scarcely proceed, and by the motion of his head and right arm seemed to say: "For heaven's sake, madame, leave me alone; and let me sing my part to the end."

Madame Devrient's singing, I have already said, is often wanting in exactness and taste. The pauses and changes which she introduces into her parts are in bad style and awkwardly brought in. But they are nothing to her spoken interjections—such words as O God; yes; no; impossible! spoken, or rather shouted, in the loudest voice. I cannot express my aversion for this anti-musical declamation. To my mind it is a hundred times worse to speak in an opera than to sing in a tragedy.

One sees occasionally a phrase in the scores marked

canto parlato, but such phrases are not intended to be hurled forth in the manner I have described; they should be delivered in a musical tone of voice in tune with the accompaniment. Everyone can remember the way in which Mademoiselle Falcon used to give the words at the end of that same duet, "Raoul! ils te tueront!" in *spoken singing,* at once natural and musical, and also immensely effective. How different, when in answer to Raoul's entreaties, Madame Devrient shouts thrice with a powerful *crescendo,* "*Nein! nein! nein!*" One might be listening to Dorval or Georges in a melodrama, and one asks why the orchestra should go on playing when the opera is over. It is really too absurd. I was too furious at hearing a masterpiece like the fourth act thus treated to wait for the fifth. Am I slandering you, dear Habeneck, if I say that I feel sure you would have done the same? I hardly think so. I know your feeling about music.

Madame Devrient has certainly fire and spirit, but these fine qualities, even had they been enough in themselves, never struck me as sufficiently restrained within their natural limits. The part of Valentine, for example, even independently of what I have just been saying—Valentine the young bride of a day, whose heart though strong is timid, the noble wife of Nevers, who only avows her chaste love to Raoul in order to save him from death—is surely better represented by modest passion, dignified acting, and expressive singing, than by all the exaggerated volleys and detestable egoism of Madame Devrient.

Some days after the *Huguenots* I saw *Armide.* This celebrated work was revived with all the care and respect due to it; the *mise en scène* was magnificent and dazzling, and the public proved itself worthy of the favour granted

to it. Of all the ancient composers, Gluck has, I believe, the least to fear from the incessant revolutions of art. He sacrificed nothing either to the caprices of singers, the exigencies of fashion, or the inveterate routine with which he had to contend on his arrival in France, after his protracted struggles with the Italian theatres. Doubtless his conflicts at Milan, Naples, and Parma, instead of weakening him, had increased his strength by revealing its full extent to himself; for, in spite of the fanaticism then prevalent in our artistic customs, he broke these miserable trammels and trod them underfoot with the greatest ease. True, the clamour of the critics once succeeded in forcing him into a reply; but it was the only indiscretion with which he had to reproach himself, and thenceforth, as before, he went straight to his aim in silence. We all know what that aim was; we also know that it was never given to any man to succeed more fully. With less conviction or less firmness, it is probable that, notwithstanding his natural genius, his degenerate works would not have long survived those of his mediocre rivals now completely forgotten. But truth of expression, purity of style, and grandeur of form belong to all time. Gluck's fine passages will always be fine. Victor Hugo is right: the heart never grows old.

I thought Mademoiselle Marx in *Armide* noble and impassioned, although somewhat overwhelmed by her lofty part. In fact, mere talent does not suffice to represent Gluck's women; for them, as for Shakespeare's, the greatest qualities of soul, heart, voice, physiognomy, and pose are so indispensable, that there is no exaggeration in asserting that these characters absolutely require both beauty and genius.

What a happy evening I passed listening to that

performance of *Armide*, under Meyerbeer's direction! Orchestra and chorus alike inspired by the composer and the conductor, showed themselves worthy of two such illustrious masters. The famous *finale*, *Poursuivons jusqu'au trépas*, produced a regular *furore*. The Hatred scene, with the admirable dances composed, if I mistake not, by Paul Taglioni, struck me as equally remarkable for its *verve* and for the *infernal* harmony which pervaded it. They suppressed the dance air in A major 6-8, which we play, and in its stead introduced the great chaconne in B flat, unknown in Paris, but well worked out and most striking and fiery. What a conception is that Hatred scene! I had never before so fully understood or admired it. I shuddered at this passage in the invocation:

Sauvez-moi de l'amour;
Rien n'est si redoutable!

On the first line the two oboes make a cruel discord on the major seventh, like a woman's cry of terror and keenest anguish. But in the following verse,

Contre un ennemi trop aimable,

how tenderly do those same two voices lament in thirds! A few notes only, but how full of regret; and how one feels the enormous power of love thus bemoaned! In fact, no sooner has Hatred arrived with her terrible attendants and begun her work, than *Armide* interrupts her and refuses her aid.

Thereupon the chorus,

Suis l'amour, puisque tu le veux,
Infortunée Armide;
Suis l'amour, qui te guide
Dans un abime affreux!

There the act ends, and in Quinault's poem Armide goes out with the chorus without a word. But to Gluck this

dénouement seemed commonplace and unnatural; he desired that the enchantress should remain for a moment alone, and then retire musing on what she had just heard; and one day after a rehearsal at the Opéra he improvised both words and music of the scene as they stand at the end:

> O ciel! quelle horrible menace!
> Je frémis! tout mon sang se glace!
> Amour, puissant amour, viens calmer mon effroi,
> Et prends pitié d'un cœur qui s'abandonne à toi!

The music is lovely: full of melody, harmony, vague uneasiness, touching languor—in a word, of the finest dramatic and musical inspiration.

Between each exclamation in the first two lines the basses play a long chromatic phrase, underlying a sort of intermittent *tremolo* in the second violins, which continues to growl and menace until, at the word *amour*, in the third line, the semi-obscurity of the preceding bars is relieved by the tender light of a soothing melody. After this all dies away. . . . Armide withdraws with downcast eyes, while the second violins, abandoned by the rest of the orchestra, continue their solitary *tremolo*. Stupendous genius to have created such a scene!

Bless me! My admiring analysis is really *naïve;* I really might be initiating you, Habeneck, into the beauties of Gluck's work. But you know it is involuntary! I am talking to you now as we do sometimes on the boulevards, after the Conservatoire concerts, when our enthusiasm is too strong to be kept in.

I will make one remark about the *mise en scène* of this piece at Berlin.

The curtain drops too quickly; it ought to wait until the last bar of the final *ritornel*, otherwise Armide's slow exit up the stage is lost to sight. This effect was

most beautiful at the Paris Opéra, where the curtain was never lowered at all when *Armide* was performed. On the other hand, although you know I disapprove of the conductor's making any changes in music not his own, where his only business is to secure a good performance, I must compliment Meyerbeer on a happy idea in connection with the *tremolo* just mentioned. This passage for the second violins being on the low D, Meyerbeer, in order to make it more striking, had it played on two strings in unison, the open D and the D on the fourth string. The natural consequence of this is that the number of the instruments appears suddenly to have been doubled, while the combination of the two strings produces a certain resonance that is most effective. *Such* corrections of Gluck are always permissible.[1]

It is like your idea of playing the famous continuous *tremolo* of the oracle in *Alceste* close to the bridge of the violin and *smashing the string.* Gluck did not express this, it is true, but *he ought to have done so.*

For exquisite expression the performance of the scenes in the *Jardin des plaisirs* surpassed all the others to my

[1] No, these things ought never to be done. I was wrong to write what I did. Gluck knew the effect of two strings in unison as well as Meyerbeer; and if he did not intend them to be used no one has any right to introduce them into his works. But Meyerbeer has introduced other effects into *Armide*, such as those of the trombones in the duet, *Esprits de haine et de rage*, which are incredible blunders and cannot be sufficiently blamed. Spontini once reproached me for not having pointed them out. And yet he himself added wind instruments in *Iphigénie en Tauride*. . . . Forgetting that he had been guilty of this weakness, he exclaimed on another occasion: "It is dreadful! Will they instrument me also after I am dead?" [Neither Spontini nor Berlioz is likely to last long enough for that; but it is quite possible that some wretch may lay hands on Beethoven. Indeed it has surely been done already somewhere in Germany.]

mind. It was a kind of voluptuous languor, a fascinating *morbidezza* that transported me into the palace of love dreamed of by Gluck and Tasso, and seemed to present it to me as an enchanted abode. I closed my eyes, and whilst listening to the divine gavotte, with its caressing melody and its softly murmuring monotonous harmony, and the chorus, *Jamais dans ces beaux lieux*, so exquisitely graceful in its expression of happiness, I seemed to be surrounded on all sides by enfolding arms, adorable, intertwining feet, floating hair, shining eyes, and intoxicating smiles. The flower of pleasure, gently stirred by the melodious breeze, expanded, and a concert of sounds, colours, and perfumes poured forth from its enchanting corolla. Is this Gluck, the terrible musician who sang of the pains of Tartarus, the desolate shores of Tauris and its savage inhabitants? Is it he who could thus reproduce in music so marvellous an ideal of voluptuous reverie, of repose in love? . . . Why not? Had he not already opened the Elysian fields? Was not he the creator of that immortal chorus of the happy spirits?—

> Torna, o bella, al tuo consorte
> Che non vuol che più diviso
> Sia di te pietoso il ciel!

And as our great modern poet has said, are not the strongest generally also the gentlest?

But I perceive that the pleasure of talking with you of all these beautiful things has carried me too far, so that I cannot speak of the non-dramatic musical institutions flourishing at Berlin. They shall be the subject of a second letter, and shall serve as a pretext for boring someone else with my indefatigable verbosity. You don't bear me too great a grudge for this, do you? In any case, farewell!

H. B.

CHAPTER LX.

Berlin.

Letter IX.—To Monsieur Demarest.

I should never have done with this royal city of Berlin if I were to examine all its musical wealth in detail. Few, if any, capitals can boast such treasures. Music is in the air. You breathe it; it penetrates you. You find it in the theatre, in church, in the concert-room, in the street, in the public gardens, everywhere; ever great and proud, strong and agile, radiant with youth and beauty, with noble and serious air, like a beautiful armed angel, who sometimes deigns to walk the earth, but whose wings are always vibrating, ready to take flight to heaven.

The reason is that music in Berlin is honoured by all, and held in equal veneration by rich and poor, artists and amateurs, clergy and soldiers, King and people. The King especially worships it with that genuine fervour which animates his devotion to science and the arts, and that is saying a great deal. He follows with an eager eye the onward progress of modern art, without neglecting the preservation of the ancient masterpieces. He has a prodigious memory, which is indeed embarrassing to his librarians and kapell-meisters when he calls on them unexpectedly for the performance of certain unknown pieces from the old masters. Nothing escapes him either present

or past; he wishes to hear and to examine into everything. Hence the keen attraction Berlin has for great artists, the extraordinary universality of musical feeling in Prussia, and hence also the choral and instrumental institutions of its capital, which I have always thought so worthy of admiration.

One of these is the Singing Academy. Like that of Leipzig and all the other academies of the same nature in Germany, it is composed almost entirely of amateurs; but several of the artists of the theatre, both men and women, also belong to it, and the ladies in the best society do not think it at all derogatory to sing an oratorio of Bach side by side with Mantius, Boeticher, or Mdlle. Hähnel. Most of the singers in the Berlin academy are musicians, and nearly all have fresh and full voices; the sopranos and basses in particular I thought excellent. The rehearsals, moreover, are skilfully directed at great length and with much patience by M. Rungenhagen; and accordingly, whenever a great work is performed, the results are magnificent and far beyond anything of the same sort at Paris.

I was invited by the director to a performance of Sebastian Bach's *Passion*. That celebrated work, with which you are no doubt familiar, is written for two choirs and two orchestras. The singers, at least three hundred, were arranged in order upon the steps of a large amphitheatre, exactly like that in the chemistry lecture-room at the Jardin des Plantes; a space of three or four feet separated the two choirs. The two orchestras, neither of them large, accompany the voices from the highest steps behind the chorus, and are consequently somewhat distant from the conductor, who is placed below, in front, and close beside the piano. I ought rather to call it a harpsi-

chord, for it has almost the tone of the miserable instruments of that name used in Bach's time. I do not know if such a choice is made designedly, but I have remarked in all singing schools, in the lobbies of theatres, and in fact everywhere, that the piano intended to accompany the voice is always the most detestable that can be found. The one which Mendelssohn used at Leipzig in the Gewandhaus concert-room is the only exception.

You want to know what the piano-harpsichord can have to do *during the performance* of a work in which the author has not employed that instrument at all! It accompanies along with the orchestra, and probably serves to keep the first ranks of the chorus in tune, since they are supposed not to be able to hear the orchestra properly in the *tuttis*, as it is too far from them. At any rate, it is the custom. The constant strumming of the chords on this bad piano produces a most wearisome effect by spreading a superfluous layer of monotony over the whole; but that is doubtless one reason for not giving it up. An old custom is so sacred when it is bad! The singers sit during the intervals, and rise for singing. I think there is really an advantage in singing standing for the proper emission of the voice; but it is unfortunate that the singers should weary of this posture and want to sit down as soon as each movement is finished, for in a work like Bach's, where the two choirs not only carry on dialogues but are interrupted every instant by solo recitatives, it follows that one side is always rising and another sitting down, and in the long run this series of ups and downs becomes rather absurd. Besides, it takes away all unexpectedness from certain entries of the choir, because the audience perceive in advance the direction from

which the sound is coming before they hear it. I should prefer the choristers to be always seated if they could not remain standing. But this impossibility is among those which vanish instantaneously if the director knows how to say *I will* or *I will not.*

Be this as it may, there was something very imposing in the performance of these vocal bodies; the first *tutti* of the two choruses took away my breath, as I did not expect such a powerful burst of harmony. It must, however, be admitted that one wearies of this fine sonorousness far more quickly than that of the orchestra, the *timbre* of voices being less varied than that of instruments. This is easily understood; there are only four kinds of voices, while the number of different instruments is upwards of thirty.

You will not, my dear Demarest, expect an analysis from me of Bach's great work; such a task would quite exceed my prescribed limits. Indeed, the movement performed at the Conservatoire three years ago may be considered the type of the author's style throughout the work. The Germans profess an unlimited admiration for Bach's recitatives, but their peculiar characteristic necessarily escaped me, as I did not understand the language, and was unable to appreciate their expression.

Whoever is familiar with our musical customs in Paris must witness, in order to believe, the attention, respect, and even reverence with which a German public listens to such a composition. Everyone follows the words on the book with his eyes; not a movement among the audience, not a murmur of praise or blame, not a sound of applause; they are listening to a solemn discourse, they are hearing the gospel sung, they are attending divine service rather than a concert. And really such music ought to be thus listened to. They adore Bach, and

believe in him, without supposing for a moment that his divinity could ever be called into question. A heretic would horrify them, he is forbidden even to speak of him. God is God and Bach is Bach.

Some days after the performance of Bach's *chef d'œuvre*, the Singing Academy announced Graun's *Tod Jesu*. This is another sacred work, a holy book, the worshippers of which are, however, mainly to be found in Berlin, whereas the religion of Bach is professed throughout the north of Germany.

You may judge of the interest I felt in this second soirée after the impression made upon me by the first, and of the eagerness with which I would have made acquaintance with the favourite work of the great Frederick's kapell-meister. Behold my misfortune! Precisely on that day I fall ill; the doctor, although a great lover of music (the learned and amiable Dr. Gaspard), forbids me to leave my room; in vain I am urged to go and admire a famous organist; the doctor is inflexible; and not till after Holy Week, when there are no more oratorios, or fugues, or chorales to be heard, does the Almighty restore me to health. Hence my enforced silence about the famous musical service of the Berlin churches. If I ever return to Prussia, ill or well, I must hear Graun's music; and I will hear it, you may be sure, if I am to die for it. But in that case it would be impossible for me to tell you anything about it. . . . It is decided, then, that you will hear nothing on the subject *from me;* so you had better take the journey yourself, and it will be for you to give me an account of it.

As for the military bands, one would have designedly to avoid them not to hear at least some, since at all

hours of the day, either on foot or on horseback, they are passing through the streets of Berlin. These little isolated bands do not, however, give any idea of the majesty of the grand whole which the head bandmaster of the military bands at Berlin and Potsdam (Wiprecht) can collect whenever he chooses. Imagine, he has a body of upwards of six hundred musicians under his command, all good readers, all well up in the mechanism of their instruments, playing in tune, and favoured by nature with indefatigable lungs and lips of leather. Hence the extreme facility with which the trumpets, horns, and cornets give those high notes unattainable by our artists. They are regiments of musicians, rather than musicians of regiments. The Crown Prince of Prussia, anticipating my desire to hear his musical troops and study them at my leisure, kindly invited me to a *matinée* organised at his house expressly for me, and gave Wiprecht orders accordingly. The audience was very small—twelve or fifteen at the most. I was astonished at not seeing the orchestra, no sound betrayed its presence, when a slow phrase in F minor, well known to both you and me, made me turn my head towards the largest room in the palace, which was concealed from our sight by an immense curtain. His royal highness had had the courtesy to order the concert to open with the overture to the *Francs Juges*, which I had never heard arranged thus for wind instruments. There were three hundred and twenty players, directed by Wiprecht, and difficult as the music was, they performed it with marvellous exactness, and that furious fire with which you of the Conservatoire perform it on your great days of enthusiasm and ardour.

The solo for the brass in the introduction was especially

startling, performed by fifteen bass trombones, eighteen or twenty tenors and altos, twelve bass tubas, and a host of trumpets.

The bass tuba, which I have already named several times in my former letters, has dethroned the ophicleide in Prussia, if, indeed, it ever reigned there, which I doubt. The bass tuba is a huge brass instrument, derived from the bombardon, and furnished with a mechanism of five cylinders, which gives it an immense compass in the bass. It is true that the extreme low notes of the scale are a little vague, but when doubled in the high octave by another part of the bass tuba they acquire an incredible roundness and force of vibration. The middle and high tones of the instrument are, moreover, very fine, not at all dull like those of the ophicleide, but vibrative, and very sympathetic to the tones of the trombones and trumpets, of which it forms the true double-bass, and with which it harmonises perfectly. Adolphe Sax makes them, and Wiprecht has introduced them into Prussia.

The clarinets seemed to me equal to the brass: they performed great feats in a grand battle-symphony composed for two orchestras by the English ambassador, the Earl of Westmoreland.

Afterwards came a brilliant and chivalrous piece for brass only, written by Meyerbeer for the Court festivals under the title of *Torchlight Dance*, in which there is a long trill on the D, kept up through sixteen bars by eighteen cylinder trumpets, doing it as rapidly as the clarinets could have done. The concert ended with a very fine and well-written funeral march, composed by Wiprecht, and played with only one rehearsal!

In the intervals allowed between the pieces by this terrible orchestra, I had the honour of talking for a few

moments with the Crown Princess of Prussia, whose exquisite taste and knowledge in composition make her opinion most valuable. Her royal highness speaks our language, moreover, with a purity and elegance that quite abashed her interlocutor. I wish I could draw a Shakespearian portrait of the Princess, or at least give you a glimpse of the veiled outline of her sweet beauty; I might dare to do so, perhaps, were I a great poet.

I was present at one of the Court concerts. Meyerbeer was at the piano. There was no orchestra, and the singers were those of the theatre, whom I have already mentioned. Towards the end of the evening, Meyerbeer—who, although a great pianist, and, indeed, perhaps for that very reason sometimes wearies of his task as an accompanyist—gave up his place: guess to whom?—to the King's first chamberlain, the Count de Roedern, who accompanied Madame Devrient in Schubert's *Erl King*, like a pianist and consummate musician! What do you say to that, and to the amazing spread of musical knowledge which it betokens? M. de Roedern has also another talent, of which he gave brilliant proof by organising the famous masked ball that created such a sensation at Berlin last winter, under the name of "The Festival of the Court of Ferrara," and for which Meyerbeer wrote a host of pieces. These ceremonious concerts always seem cold; but people find them very agreeable when they are over, because they usually bring together some hearers with whom one is proud and pleased to have a moment's conversation. In this way I met, in the presence of the King of Prussia, with M. Alexander von Humboldt, so celebrated in scientific literature, and the great anatomist of the terrestrial globe.

Several times in the course of the evening the King and

Queen and the Crown Princess of Prussia came and talked to me about the concert I had just given at the Grand Théâtre, asking my opinion about the principal Prussian artists, questioning me about my methods of instrumentation, etc., etc. The King declared that I had fired the spirit of all the musicians in his orchestra.

After supper, His Majesty prepared to return to his apartments, but suddenly coming to me as though he had changed his mind:

"By-the-way, Monsieur Berlioz, what shall you give us at your next concert?"

"Sire, I shall repeat half of the preceding programme, with five pieces out of my symphony, *Romeo and Juliet*."

"*Romeo and Juliet*, and I am about to make a journey. We must hear that, however. I will come back." And accordingly on the evening of my second concert, five minutes before the appointed hour, the King got out of his carriage and entered his box.

Those two soirées gave me a great deal of trouble, I assure you. And yet the artists were clever and well disposed, and Meyerbeer seemed to multiply himself in order to assist me. The fact is, that the requirements of a great theatre like that of Berlin are quite incompatible with preparations for a concert, and Meyerbeer must certainly have used greater pressure and address to overcome all these recurring difficulties than in getting up the *Huguenots* for the first time. Moreover, I had wished to bring out the great pieces from the Requiem, the *Prose* (*Dies Iræ*, *Lacrymosa*, etc.), which I had not yet attempted in the other German towns, and you know what a vocal and instrumental preparation they necessitate. Fortunately, I had warned Meyerbeer of my intention, and before my arrival he had been already

searching for the means necessary to carry it out. As for the four little brass orchestras, it was easy to find them —we could have had thirty if necessary—but the kettle-drums and drummers gave a great deal of trouble. However, by the aid of Wiprecht, we succeeded at last in getting them together.

For the first rehearsals we were put into a splendid concert-room belonging to the second theatre, the echo of which was unhappily so great, that on my first entrance I saw what we should have to endure. The resonance produced an insupportable confusion, and made the practice of the orchestra exceedingly difficult. There was one piece, indeed, the *scherzo* from *Romeo and Juliet*, that we were obliged to give up altogether, not having succeeded in doing more than one-half after an hour. And yet, I repeat, the orchestra could not have been better composed. But we had not sufficient time, and were obliged to postpone the *scherzo* to the second concert. I got used to the hubbub at last; I found out what the echo would allow to be done and what it would not, and we pursued our studies accordingly without taking into consideration the effect, which was very different from what we obtained afterwards in the opera concert-room. The overture to *Benvenuto*, *Harold*, Weber's *Invitation*, and the pieces from the Requiem were thus learnt by the orchestra alone, the chorus working in another room. At the special rehearsal which I had called for the four brass orchestras in the *Dies Iræ* and the *Lacrymosa*, I observed for the third time the following fact, which has always remained inexplicable to me:

In the middle of the *Tuba Mirum* the four groups of trombones play the four notes of the chord of G major in succession. The bar is a long one; the first group

should give the G on the first beat; the second the B on the second; the third the D on the third; and the fourth the octave G on the fourth. Nothing more easy of conception than such a succession, nothing more easily played than each of these notes! But still, when the Requiem was performed for the first time in the Church of the Invalides at Paris, it was impossible to get the passage done. Subsequently, when movements from the work were played at the Opéra, after having in vain practised that one bar for a quarter of an hour, I was obliged to give it up; one or two of the groups always came in wrong, invariably the B or the D—sometimes both. At Berlin, when my eye fell on that part of the score, I thought at once of the stubborn trombones in Paris.

"Let us see," said I to myself, "if the Prussian artists will succeed in smashing in that open door!"

Alas! no! Vain efforts! Neither rage nor patience availed anything! It was impossible to get the second or third group to come in, even the fourth, not hearing its cue, which ought to have been given by the others, did not strike up either. I take them separately.

I ask the second to give the B.

He gives it all right.

Addressing myself to the third, I ask for his D.

He gives it without difficulty.

Now let us have the four notes, one after the other in the order in which they are written. . . . Impossible! Quite impossible! And we must give it up! Can you understand that? And is it not enough to make one knock one's head against the wall? . . .

And when I asked the trombone players at Paris and Berlin why they did not play in the fatal bar, they could

not tell what to answer, they did not know themselves; the two notes fascinated them.[1]

The rest of the programme the orchestra understood, and carried out my intentions perfectly. We soon managed to have a general rehearsal in the theatre on the stage arranged with steps as for a concert. Symphony, overture, cantata, all went to a wish, but when it came to the selection from the Requiem there was a general panic; the chorus had practised in different *tempos* from mine, and when they found themselves combined with the orchestra at the proper speed, they no longer knew what they were about, they came in wrong or without confidence, and in the *Lacrymosa* the tenors left off singing altogether. I did not know what saint to invoke. Meyerbeer was ill and unable to leave his bed, the choirmaster was ill also, the orchestra became demoralised in the chorus by the confusion. For one moment I sat down quite exhausted, and asked myself whether I should leave them all in the lurch and run away that same evening. And I thought of you at that dreadful moment, and said to myself: "It is madness to go on! Oh, if Demarest were here! he who is never satisfied with our Conservatoire rehearsals; and if he could see me bent on allowing the concert to be announced for to-morrow, I know very well what he would do; he would shut me up in my room, put the key in his pocket, and bravely go and inform the manager of the theatre that the concert could not take place."

You know you would have done so, would not you?

[1] At the last two performances of the Requiem in the Church of St. Eustache, in Paris, this passage was given, however, without a mistake. [No difficulty was found at the Crystal Palace at the performances in 1882 and 1883.]

Well, you would have been wrong, as I shall prove to you. After the first trembling fit had passed and the first cold perspiration was wiped off, I came to a decision, and I said:

"The thing must be done!"

Ries and Ganz, the two maîtres de concert, were close to me, not knowing really what to say to reassure me.

"Are you sure of the orchestra?" said I sharply.

"Yes, there is nothing to be afraid of as far as it is concerned; we are very tired, but we understand your music, and to-morrow you will be satisfied."

"Very well then, there is only one thing to be done; you must summon the chorus for to-morrow morning, give me a good accompanyist, and one of you bring your violin, and we will practise the singing for three hours if necessary."

"All right! We will be there. Orders shall be given directly."

Accordingly, next morning we set to work, Ries, the accompanyist, and myself. We took each part of the chorus in succession; made them sing in groups of ten, then of twenty, then joined two parts, three, four, and finally all the voices. And like Phaeton in the fable, I exclaimed at last:

"Qu'est-ce ceci? Mon char marche à souhait."

I made a little speech to the chorus, which Ries translated into German phrase by phrase; and behold all our forces reanimated, full of courage, and enchanted at not having lost a battle in which both their honour and mine were at stake. On the contrary, we gained a brilliant victory. It is needless to say the overture, the symphony, and the *Cinq Mai* cantata were splendidly performed in the evening. With such an orchestra and

a singer like Boeticher, it could not be otherwise. But when the Requiem came, everyone being very attentive, very earnest, and desirous of pleasing me, the orchestras and the chorus being perfectly placed, everyone at his post, nothing wanting, we began the *Dies Iræ*. No mistakes, no indecision; the chorus sustained the assault of the orchestra without flinching; the fourfold peal of trumpets broke forth from the four corners of the stage, already vibrating with the rolling of the ten kettle-drums and the *tremolo* of fifty bows; and in the midst of this cataclysm of sinister harmonies and noise from the other world the hundred and twenty voices hurled forth their terrible prediction:

Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit!

For one instant the public overwhelmed the opening of the *Liber scriptus* with applause, and we reached the last *sotto voce* chords of the *Mors stupebit* trembling but victorious.

And what delight among the performers! What glances flashed from end to end of the stage! As for me, I had a peal of bells in my heart, a mill-wheel in my head, my knees were knocking against each other; I dug my nails into the desk; and, if I had not forced myself at the last bar to laugh and talk very loud and fast with Ries, who kept by my side, I am quite sure that, for the first time in my life, I should, as soldiers say, have *turned up my eyes* in a most absurd manner. The first volley once endured, the rest was mere play, and the *Lacrymosa* finished up that apocalyptic evening to the author's entire satisfaction.

When the concert was over, a great many people came up and spoke to me, congratulated me, and shook me by

the hand; but there I stayed, without understanding . . . without feeling anything . . . brain and nerves alike overstrained. I had to become stupid in order to rest. Wiprecht alone, with his cuirassiers, had the power to make me come to. He really made me split my sides, dear good man, by interlarding his exclamations with German oaths, to which Guhr's were mere Ave Marias.

Certainly, if anyone had attempted to sound my palpitating joy, they would have found it fathomless. You will admit, then, that it is sometimes wise to commit an act of madness; for, had it not been for my audacity the concert would never have taken place; for the business of the theatre had been so arranged that it would have been impossible to recommence the study of the Requiem.

For the second concert, I announced, as I said above, five pieces from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Queen Mab* among the number. During the fortnight between the first and second performances Ganz and Taubert had been studying the score of the *scherzo*, and when they saw me resolved upon giving it, it was their turn to take fright.

"We shall never manage it," they said. "You know that we can only have two rehearsals; it ought to have five or six, nothing is more difficult or dangerous; it is a musical spider's web, and without an extraordinary delicacy of feeling it would be torn into rags."

"Bah! I bet you that we shall get through again. True, we have but two rehearsals, but there are only five new pieces to learn, four of which contain no great difficulty. Besides, the orchestra has already some idea of the *scherzo* from our first partial attempt at it. And Meyerbeer has spoken of it to the King, who wants to hear it, and I want the artists to know it, and so it *shall*

go." And it did go, nearly as well as at Brunswick. You can venture a great deal with such musicians—musicians who were not only directed by Meyerbeer, but had had a long apprenticeship under Spontini.

This second concert was equally successful with the first; the pieces from *Romeo* were very well played. *Queen Mab* puzzled the public a good deal, including certain learned hearers; witness the Crown Princess of Prussia, who was bent on finding out how I had produced the effect of the accompaniment in the *allegretto*, and never imagined that in several places it was done with the harmonics of the violins and harps. The King preferred the *Fête at the Capulets'*, and asked for a copy; but I think that the sympathies of the orchestra were rather with the *Scène d'amour* (*adagio*). In that case the Berlin musicians were of the same way of thinking as the Paris ones. At the rehearsal, Mademoiselle Hähnel sung the contralto verses of the prologue with perfect simplicity, but at the concert she thought it her duty at the end of the lines,

> Où se consume
> Le rossignol en longs soupirs !

to embellish the pause with a long shake in imitation of the nightingale. Oh, mademoiselle! What treason! And you seemed so nice!

Well, well! there are some people who openly prefer the *Cinq Mai* to the *Dies Iræ*, the *Tuba Mirum*, the *Lacrymosa* and *Offertoire* from the Requiem, the overtures to *Benvenuto* and *King Lear*, *Harold*, the *Serenade*, *Pilgrims*, and *Brigands*, *Romeo and Juliet*, the concert and ball at the Capulets', the witcheries of Queen Mab, to everything, in fact, that I performed at Berlin!

I know that impressions are as varied as voices, but when they told me this I was obliged to make a wry face. Happily these opinions are quite exceptional.

Farewell, my dear Demarest; you know that in a few days we shall have to perform an anthem at the Conservatoire; assemble your sixteen grand violoncellos. I shall be very happy to hear them again, and to see you at their head. It is so long since we have played together. And, in order to give them a treat, tell them I shall conduct with Mendelssohn's baton. Yours ever,

H. B.

CHAPTER LXI.

Hanover—Darmstadt.

Letter X.—To Mr. G. A. Osborne.

Alas! alas! my dear Osborne, my journey is drawing to a close. I am leaving Prussia, full of gratitude for the welcome I received there, for the warm sympathy of the artists, and the indulgence both of the critics and the public; but weary and exhausted by the life of excessive activity and the continual rehearsals with fresh orchestras. So weary am I that I shall give up Breslau, Vienna, and Munich for the present, and get back to France. A certain vague uneasiness, a fever in my blood, an aimless restlessness in heart and head, already tell me that I am again in communication with the electric current of Paris. Paris! Paris! as our great poet, A. Barbier, has but too truly depicted it:

> Cette infernale cuve,
> Cette fosse de pierre aux immenses contours,
> Qu'une eau jaune et terreuse enferme à triples tours;
> C'est un volcan fumeux, et toujours en haleine,
> Qui remue à long flot de la matière humaine.
>
> Là personne ne dort, là toujours le cerveau
> Travaille, et, comme l'arc, tend son rude cordeau.

It is there that our art now lies dormant, and then again bursts into a flame; there music is at once sublime and

commonplace, lofty and mean, beggar and king, exalted and despised, adored and insulted. In Paris music finds faithful, enthusiastic, intelligent, and devoted disciples; and in Paris also it appeals too often to the deaf, to idiots, and barbarians. At one time it moves and soars in freedom; at another, its glorious limbs are so fettered by the bonds of the hag Routine, as hardly to allow of a slow and ungraceful walk. It is in Paris that music is crowned and deified—always provided that no sacrifice of value is required for it. It is in Paris too that her temples are inundated with magnificent presents—on condition that the goddess shall become a mortal, not to say a mountebank. In Paris, too, Commerce, Art's bastard brother, clad in gaudy tinsel, displays its vulgar insolence before all eyes; while Art itself, like the Pythian Apollo, in its divine nudity, scarcely deigns to interrupt its lofty meditations with a smile of contempt. Sometimes—shame that it should be so!—the bastard obtains such incredible favours from his brother as to insinuate himself into the chariot of light, seize the reins, and attempt to force backwards the immortal car; till the real driver, startled by such stupid audacity, tears him from his seat and hurls him to the ground. And it is money that brings about this fleeting and odious alliance, it is the love of immediate and hastily-gotten lucre which thus sometimes poisons the souls of the very elect.

> L'argent, l'argent fatal, dernier dieu des humains,
> Les prend par les cheveux, les secoue à deux mains,
> Les pousse dans le mal, et pour un vil salaire
> Leur mettrait les deux pieds sur le corps de leur père.

And such noble souls generally fall only because they have overlooked the sad but incontestable truth, that with our form of government and with our present

habits, the more artistic the artist, the more he has to bear; the greater and more original his work, the more severely does he suffer from the consequences it entails; the more elevated his thoughts, the further is he removed from the dim eyes of the crowd.

The Medicis are dead. They will hardly be replaced by our deputies. You remember the profound remark of a provincial Lycurgus on hearing some poetry by one of our greatest poets (the one who wrote *La Chute d'un Ange*). "Yes," he said, opening his snuffbox with a paternal air—"yes, I have a nephew who writes little trifles like that." After this, will you look for encouragement for artists from the *colleague of the poet?*

You virtuosi, who do not stir the musical emotions of large masses, who only write for the orchestra of your two hands, and are independent of vast rooms and large choirs, you have little to fear from contact with vulgar habits, and yet you also feel their effects. Scribble some brilliant trifle, and the publishers will cover it with gold and scramble for it; but if you have the misfortune to develop a serious idea under a grand form, then you are done for; the work remains on your hands, or at any rate, if it is published, no one buys it.

It is only fair to say, in order slightly to justify Paris and constitutionalism, that it is the same almost everywhere else. At Vienna, as here, a fashionable writer is paid a thousand francs for a song or a waltz, while Beethoven was obliged to give the Symphony in C minor for less than half that sum.

You have published trios and various pieces for the piano solo, grand in composition and elevated in style; and even without searching through your full *répertoire*,

your solo songs, such as *The beating of my own heart*, *My lonely home*, or, *Such things were*—which your sister, Mrs. Hampton, sings so poetically—are fascinating things. Nothing excites my imagination more vividly and makes it fly more rapidly to the green hills of Ireland, than those quaint original melodies, which seem wafted by the evening breeze over the gently rippling waves of the Lake of Killarney; or those hymns of resigned love, to which one listens with unconscious emotion, dreaming of solitude, of grand nature, of beloved beings who are no more, of the heroes of ancient times, of one's suffering country, even of death itself, "*dreamy and calm as the night*," according to the expression of your national poet, Thomas Moore. Well, put all these inspirations, all this melancholy poetry in the balance with some turbulent caprice devoid alike of mind and heart, such as music-sellers often order you to write on the more or less vulgar themes of the new operas, where the notes jostle, pursue, and roll over one another like a handful of bells shaken in a bag, and you will soon see on which side the monetary success would be. No, one must make up one's mind that—except for certain chance circumstances and certain associations with the inferior arts, always more or less degrading—music is not productive in the commercial sense of the word; it addresses itself too exclusively to exceptional intelligent society, it demands too much preparation, too many appliances. There must therefore of necessity be a sort of honourable ostracism for those who cultivate it, without being in any way preoccupied by foreign interests. Even the greatest nations are, with regard to artists pure and simple, like the deputy of whom I spoke just now; side by side with

the giants of human genius, they place their *nephews who also write, etc., etc.*

In the archives of one of the London theatres is a letter addressed to Queen Elizabeth by a *troupe* of actors, and signed by twenty obscure names, among which is that of William Shakespeare, with the collective designation of *Your poor players.*[1] Shakespeare was one of those *poor players.* . . . And yet dramatic art in the time of Shakespeare was more appreciated by the masses than it is in our day by those nations which lay most claim to possess a feeling for it. Music is essentially aristocratic; it is a daughter of noble race, such as princes only can dower nowadays, who must be able to live poor and unmated rather than form a *mésalliance.* All these reflections you have doubtless made to yourself a hundred times, and I imagine you will be obliged to me to cut them short, and give you an account of my two last concerts in Germany, after leaving Berlin.

This account will, however, offer you nothing of great interest as far as I am concerned. I shall be obliged again to speak of works which I have probably already mentioned too frequently in previous letters; the same everlasting *Cinq Mai, Harold,* selections from *Romeo and Juliet,* etc. The same deficiencies in certain instrumentalists, the same excellence in other parts of the band, constituting what I shall call the old orchestra—Mozart's

[1] [It is a pity to destroy the force of this neat and apposite illustration, but unfortunately it is an entire fiction. The "letter" referred to was a petition, purporting to be from the Burbages, Shakespeare, and their fellow-players owning the Blackfriars and Globe Theatres, to the Lords of the Queen's Privy Council. It was to be found, not in "the archives of a London theatre," but in the State Paper Office; and on attention being directed to it some years ago it was proved to be a forgery, and has now disappeared.]

orchestra; and also the same faults, invariably reproducing themselves at the first attempt in the same pieces, to disappear at last after careful practice.

I did not stop at Magdeburg, where, however, I met with rather an original success. I was very nearly insulted for having had the audacity to call myself by my own name, by an employé of the mails, who, on registering my luggage and examining the address it bore, asked with an air of suspicion:

"Berlioz? The composer?"

"Ja."

Whereupon, great anger on the part of this worthy man, caused by my impertinence in trying to pass for Berlioz, the composer.

He had imagined, doubtless, that this astounding musician could only travel upon a hippogriff in the midst of a whirlwind of flames, or, at any rate, with a paraphernalia of sumptuous luggage and respectful menials. So that on seeing a man arrive, looking like any other man who has been at once frozen and smoked in a railway carriage, a man who had his trunk weighed for himself, who actually walked, and spoke French, and only knew the word "Ja" in German, he concluded at once that I was an impostor. As you may easily think, his murmurs and shrugs quite fascinated me; the more scornful his gestures and tone became, the more proudly I bore myself; if he had struck me, I should certainly have embraced him.

Another employé, who spoke my language very well, was more disposed to allow me to be myself, but his gracious speeches flattered me infinitely less than the incredulity and frank ill-humour of his *naïf* colleague.

Just consider, half a million of money would have lost

me that success. I shall be careful in future to take nothing with me, and always travel as I am now doing. This was not the opinion, however, of our witty and jovial dramatic censor, Perpignan, when he exclaimed, *à propos* to a man who was saved in a duel by the bullet being stopped by a five-franc piece in his waistcoat pocket: "These rich fellows are so lucky; I should have been killed on the spot."

I arrived at Hanover, where A. Bohrer was expecting me. The intendant, M. de Meding, had kindly put both band and theatre at my disposal, and I was just beginning my rehearsals when the death of the Duke of Sussex, the brother of the King, threw the Court into mourning, and the concert had to be postponed for a week, which gave me a little more time to make acquaintance with the principal artists who were about to suffer from the bad character of my compositions. I could not become particularly intimate with the kapell-meister, Marschner, as his difficulty in expressing himself in French made our conversations rather laboured, besides which he was extremely busy. He is now one of the first composers in Germany, and everyone appreciates the eminent merit of his works, *Der Vampyr* and *Der Templar*. Bohrer I knew already. Beethoven's trios and quartets had brought us into contact at Paris, and our mutual enthusiasm for these had not cooled since. Bohrer is one of those men who strike me as best able to understand such of Beethoven's works as are commonly reputed eccentric and unintelligible. I can still see him at quartet rehearsals, where his brother Max (the celebrated violoncello player), Claudel (the second violin), and Urhan (the viola) seconded him so well. Max, as he studied that transcendent music, smiled with pride

and pleasure; he seemed to be in his natural element, and to breathe perfect happiness. Urhan adored in silence; lowering his eyes, as though before the sun, he seemed to say: "God has willed that there should be a man as great as Beethoven, and that we should be permitted to contemplate him. God has willed it!" Claudel chiefly admired this profound admiration. As for Antoine Bohrer (the first violin), it was passion at its zenith, it was love in ecstasy. One evening, in one of those superhuman *adagios*, where Beethoven's genius soars upwards, immense and solitary as the colossal bird of the snowy heights of Chimborazo, Bohrer's violin, whilst singing the sublime melody, seemed animated by epic inspiration; his tone acquired a twofold power of expression, and broke forth in accents unknown even to himself; inspiration shone out on the countenance of the virtuoso. We held our breath with swelling hearts, when Antoine suddenly stopping short, laid down his fiery bow and rushed into an adjoining room. Madame Bohrer followed anxiously, but Max said, still smiling:

"It is nothing; he could not contain himself. We will leave him for a little to get calm, and then begin again. We must excuse him."

"Excuse him? Beloved artist!"

At Hanover, Antoine Bohrer fulfilled the duties of maître de concert. He now composes but little, his dearest occupation being to direct the musical education of his daughter, a charming child of twelve, whose marvellous organisation fills her friends with not unnatural fears. In the first place, her talent as a pianist is most extraordinary; besides which her memory is such that in the concerts she gave last year at Vienna, her father, instead of a programme, printed a list of seventy-two pieces—

sonatas, fantasias, fugues, variations, studies by Beethoven, Weber, Cramer, Bach, Handel, Liszt, Thalberg, Chopin, Döhler, etc.—which the little Sophie knew by heart, and could, without hesitation, play from memory just as the assembly might desire. It is enough for her to play over a piece three or four times, no matter how long or complicated, never to forget it. So many combinations of different kinds engraving themselves thus in this young brain! Is there not something prodigious in it, and calculated to inspire as much terror as admiration? We must hope that when little Sophie has become Mdlle. Bohrer she will return to us in a few years, and that the Parisian public may then become acquainted with that phenomenal talent of which, as yet, it has but a very feeble conception.

The orchestra at Hanover is good, but has not sufficient stringed instruments. There are only seven first violins, seven seconds, three altos, four violoncellos, and three double-basses. Some of the violins are weak, the violoncellos are skilful, the altos and double-basses good. The wind instruments deserve all praise, especially the first flute, the first oboe (Edward Rose, whose *pianissimo* playing is matchless), and the first clarinet (with an exquisite tone). The two bassoons (there are only two) play in tune, which is, unhappily, a very rare thing. The horns are not first-rate, but they pass muster. The trombones are steady, the old-fashioned trumpets pretty good. There is one splendid cylinder trumpet; the name of the player is Sachse, like that of his rival at Weimar; and I hardly know which is the best of the two. The first oboe plays the *cor anglais*, but his instrument is very much out of tune. There is no ophicleide, but the bass tubas in the military band can be used with advan-

tage. The kettle-drum is mediocre; the *musician* who takes the big-drum is *no musician at all;* the cymbal player is uncertain, and the cymbals are so broken that only a fragment of each is left.

There is a lady in the chorus who plays the harp fairly well. Though not a virtuoso, she is mistress of her instrument, and she, and the harpists of Stuttgart, Berlin, and Hamburg, are the sole exceptions I have found in Germany, where harpists in general cannot play the harp. Unfortunately, she is very timid, and not a particularly good musician; but with a few days to study her part, you may count on her exactness. She does the harmonics very well; her harp is a fine one with a double action.

The chorus is small, containing only about forty voices, not, however, devoid of merit, as they all sing in tune; the tenors in particular have a very good tone. The solo *troupe* is more than mediocre. With the exception of the bass, Steinmüller, an excellent musician with a fine voice, cleverly managed, though now and then forced, I heard nothing that I thought worthy of mention.

We could only have two rehearsals; even that was considered unusual, and certain members of the band murmured loudly. This was the only time that anything so unpleasant occurred in Germany, where the artists invariably welcomed me as a brother, without ever complaining of the time or trouble entailed by my rehearsals. A. Bohrer was in despair; he would have had four, or at least three, rehearsals; but we could not get them. The performance was passable but cold and somewhat feeble. Only think! Three double-basses, and six violins and a half on either side! The public was polite, and that was all. I believe it

is still wondering what the devil it all meant. Dr. Griepenkerl had come from Brunswick express; he was obliged to admit that there was a notable difference in the artistic spirit of the two places. We amused ourselves —he and I and some Brunswick officers—in tormenting poor Bohrer by describing the musical *fête* they had given me at Brunswick three months before. The details broke his heart. M. Griepenkerl then made me a present of his work about myself, and in return asked me to give him the baton with which I had just conducted the *Cinq Mai*. Let us hope that these batons, thus planted in France and Germany, will take root and become trees under which I may some day find shelter. . . .

The Prince Royal of Hanover was present at this concert. I had the honour of conversing with him for a few moments before my departure, and I think myself lucky to have had this opportunity of becoming acquainted with his gracious and affable manners and his distinguished mind, the serenity of which has been in no wise disturbed by the dreadful misfortune of the loss of his sight.

Now for Darmstadt. I pass Cassel at seven in the morning. But Spohr is asleep and must not be awakened.[1]

To continue. I return to Frankfort for the fourth time. There I again find Parish-Alvars, who magnetises me by his fantasia in harmonics on the chorus of the Naïades from *Oberon*. The man is a wizard, and his harp is a siren with a beautiful curved neck and long dishevelled hair, breathing forth the fascinating sounds of another world under the passionate embrace of his powerful arms.

There too is Guhr, very much exercised by the workmen who are repairing his theatre. Ah, by Jove! you

[1] [Spohr was kapell-meister at Cassel.]

must excuse me, Osborne, if I leave you to say a few words to that formidable kapell-meister. I will return immediately.

My dear Guhr,

Do you know that many people have made me fear that you took amiss the little jokes I permitted myself to make at your expense when describing our first interview? I doubted it greatly, knowing your mind, and yet the doubt troubled me.

I now hear that far from having been annoyed at the discords I lent to the harmony of your conversation, you were the first to laugh at them, and that you had a German translation of my letter printed in one of the Frankfort newspapers. That's right. You understand a joke, and besides, no one is lost for a little swearing. Hurrah! *Terque quaterque vivat!* S. N. T. T. Regard me as really one of your best friends, and accept a thousand fresh compliments on your Frankfort band—worthy of being conducted by an artist like yourself. Farewell! Farewell! S. N. T. T.

"Sacré Nom de Dieu".

Here I am again.

Well! Let us see. The question now is about Darmstadt. There we shall find some friends; among others, L. Schlosser, the concert-meister, formerly my fellow-student at Lesueur's, during his stay in Paris. Besides, I brought letters from M. de Rothschild, of Frankfort, to Prince Emile, who gave me the most charming welcome and more solid assistance for my concert than I had dared to hope. In most of the German towns where I had hitherto given concerts, the arrangement with the managers of the theatres had been almost always

identical, the manager undertaking most of the expenses and I receiving half the gross receipts. The Weimar Theatre alone courteously allowed me all the proceeds. As I have said before, Weimar is an artistic town, and the ducal family know how to honour the arts.

Well, at Darmstadt, the Grand-duke not only granted me the same favour, but wished further to exempt me from every kind of expense. This generous sovereign certainly has no *nephews who also write, etc.*

The concert was speedily organised, and far from having to ask for rehearsals from the orchestra, it would fain have had an additional week's study. We had five rehearsals. All went well, with the exception of the chorus at the beginning of the love scene in *Romeo and Juliet.* The performance of this piece was a regular vocal rout; the tenors of the second choir were nearly a semitone flat, and those of the first came in wrong at the return of the theme. The singing-master was in a fury, the more so because he had taken infinite pains with the singers for a week past.

The Darmstadt orchestra is a little larger than that of Hanover. It has an exceptionally good ophicleide. The harp part is given to a *painter*, who, in spite of all his efforts and good will, is never sure of giving much *colour* to his performance. The remainder of the instrumental body is well arranged, and animated by the best spirit. There is one remarkable virtuoso. He is named Müller, —not, however, a member of the celebrated Müller family of Brunswick. His almost colossal stature permits of his playing the true four-stringed double-bass with marvellous facility. Without trying, as he easily might, to execute turns and trills of needless difficulty and grotesque effect, he makes this enormous instrument sing

out broadly and grandly, drawing forth tones of the greatest beauty, which he shades with much art and feeling. I heard him play a most beautiful *adagio*, composed by the younger Mangold, brother to the kapell-meister, in such a manner as profoundly to move a very severe audience. It was at a soirée given by Dr. Huth, the greatest musical amateur in Darmstadt, who in his sphere does for Art what Mr. Alsager[1] does in London, and whose influence is therefore great over the musical mind of the public. Müller must be a very tempting prize to composers and conductors, but the Grand-duke will certainly dispute it with them with all his might.

The kapell-meister, Mangold, a clever and excellent man, had received much of his musical education in Paris, where he was reckoned among Reicha's best pupils. For me he was accordingly a fellow-student, and he treated me as such. As for Schlosser, the concert-meister before named, he showed himself so good a comrade and seconded me with such zeal, that it is really impossible to speak of his compositions as they deserve; I should seem to be complimenting his hospitality, when really I should only be doing him justice. A fresh proof of the truth of the anti-proverb, "A benefit is always lost!"

At Darmstadt there is a military band of about thirty musicians, for which I envied the Grand-duke. They

[1] [Mr. Alsager, one of the proprietors of *The Times*, was also one of the most distinguished musical amateurs of London at the time of Berlioz's visit. The concerts at his house in Queen Square were the best performances attainable of music, such as Beethoven's quartets, then unknown except to a very narrow circle. They were the seed from which the Musical Union, the Monday Popular Concerts, and all similar institutions in London may be said to have grown.]

play in good time, with style, and with such a feeling for rhythm that even the drum parts are interesting.

Reichel (the splendid bass who was of such use to me at Hamburg) happened to have been some time at Darmstadt when I arrived there, and had obtained quite a triumph in the part of Marcel in the *Huguenots*. He was again so kind as to sing the *Cinq Mai*, but with a talent and sentiment far beyond what he showed at the first performance. He was especially admirable in the last strophe, most difficult to express properly:

> Wie? Sterben er? O Ruhm verwaist bist du!
> What! shall he die? O Fame, then art thou widowed!

The air from Mozart's *Figaro*, *Non più andrai*, which we had added to the programme, showed the versatility of his talent, and exhibited it under a new aspect, which brought him an *encore* from the whole room, and in the morning a very profitable engagement at the Darmstadt Theatre. No occasion to tell you the rest.

If ever you go to that part of the world, they will tell you that my *naïve* vanity was such that I thought both artists and public very intelligent.

Here we are, my dear Osborne, at the end of perhaps the most difficult musical pilgrimage ever undertaken by a musician, and the memory of which I know will hover over the remainder of my life. Like the religious men of ancient Greece, I have been consulting the oracle of Delphi. Have I rightly understood its reply? Can I think it favourable to my wishes? Are there no false oracles? The future—the future alone will decide. Be this as it may, I must now return to France and bid my final farewell to Germany, that noble second

mother of all the sons of harmony. But where can I find expressions adequate to my gratitude, my admiration, and my regret? . . . What hymn could I sing worthy of her greatness and her glory? . . . On leaving her, I can only bow with reverence and say in a voice broken with emotion:

"Vale, Germania, alma parens!"

H. B.

CHAPTER LXII.

I get up *Freyschütz* for the Opéra—My Recitatives—The Singers—Dessauer—M. Léon Pillet—Havoc made by his successors in Weber's work.

I HAD just returned from this long peregrination in Germany, when M. Pillet, the Director of the Opéra, formed the plan of getting up the *Freyschütz* for the stage. But in that work the different parts are preceded and followed by prose dialogue, as in our comic operas, and since the usages of the Opéra require that everything in its dramas or lyrical tragedies should be sung, the spoken text had to be put into recitative.[1] M. Pillet offered me this task.

"I do not think," I answered, "that the recitatives you wish for ought to be added to the *Freyschütz* at all. However, since it can only be performed at the Opéra on that condition, and as you would probably, if I declined the composition, give it to someone less familiar with Weber than myself, and certainly less devoted to the glorification of his *chef d'œuvre*, I accept your offer on one condition: the piece shall be played exactly as it is, without any alteration either in the book or the music."

[1] [The distinction between a *grand opéra* in France and any other kind is that the *grand opéra* must be sung from beginning to end. The mixture of spoken dialogue with the music constitutes an *opéra comique*—not necessarily a *comic* opera.]

"That is my intention," replied M. Pillet. "Do you think me capable of renewing the scandal of *Robin des Bois?*"

"Very well; in that case I shall set to work. How do you think of distributing the parts?"

"I shall give Agatha to Mdme. Stoltz, Annette to Mdlle. Dobré; Duprez will sing Max."

"I bet you he won't," I interrupted.

"Why not?"

"You will soon know why."

"Bouché will make an excellent Gaspard."

"And who have you for the Hermit?"

"Oh," replied M. Pillet, in some embarrassment, "that's a useless part and drags heavily; my intention was to leave it out altogether."

"Oh, is that all? Is that the way you intend to respect the *Freyschütz*, and not to imitate M. Castil-Blaze? We are very far indeed from being agreed. Permit me to withdraw; it is impossible for me to have anything to say to your new *correction*."

"Good heavens! how obstinate you are. Very well, we will keep the Hermit, we will keep everything; I give you my word."

Emilien Paccini, who was to translate the libretto, having given me the same assurance, I consented, though not without misgivings, to undertake the composition of the recitatives. The feeling which had urged me to insist on the entire preservation of Weber's work, a feeling which many would call superstition, removed all pretext for the improvements, alterations, suppressions, and corrections, which otherwise would have been eagerly made.

But one grave inconvenience was a necessary result of

my obstinacy: the spoken dialogue, when set to music, seemed too long, notwithstanding all my precautions to render it as concise as possible. I never could make the actors alter their slow, heavy, and emphatic manner of singing the recitative; and in the scenes between Max and Gaspard especially, the essentially simple and familiar flow of their conversation had all the solemnity of a scene from a lyrical tragedy. This rather marred the general effect, but the success was nevertheless very striking. I did not wish to be known as the author of these recitatives, notwithstanding that both artists and critics discovered dramatic qualities in them, and especially praised the style, which they said harmonised exactly with Weber's, and the reserve in the instrumentation, which even my enemies themselves were forced to admit.

Just as I had foreseen, Duprez, who, ten years before, had in his then weak tenor voice sung Max (Tony) in the pasticcio of *Robin des Bois* at the Odéon, could not adapt this same part—rather low in general, it is true—to his great first tenor organ. He proposed some singular transpositions, necessarily intermingled with the most senseless modulations and grotesque transitions. . . . I cut short all these follies by assuring M. Pillet that Duprez could not sing this part without, by his own showing, ruining it completely.

It was then given to Marié, the second tenor, whose voice was not wanting in tone, a very good musician but a thick and heavy singer.

Neither could Mdme. Stoltz sing Agatha without transposing her two principal airs. I had to put the first (which is in E) into D, and to lower the prayer in the third act from A flat to F, which deprived it

of three-fourths of its delicious colouring. On the other hand, she was able to maintain the sextett at the end in its proper key, and sang her part with a spirit and enthusiasm that made the whole room ring with applause each night. There is about one quarter of real difficulty, another quarter of ignorance, and a good half of caprice in the objections raised by singers to rendering certain parts as they are written.

I remember that Duprez, in the song out of my opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La gloire était ma seule idole*, obstinately refused to sing a middle G, the easiest note in his voice, *and in all voices*. To G D, placed on the word "protège," which led up to the final cadence in a graceful and piquant manner, he preferred D D, which falls perfectly flat. In the air, *Asile héréditaire*, out of *Guillaume Tell*, he never would give the G flat (the enharmonic of F sharp), which Rossini had placed there so skilfully and appositely, in order to bring back the theme in its first key. He always substituted an F, which produced an insipid harshness and destroyed the whole charm of the modulation.

One day I was returning from the country with Duprez, and as I sat in the carriage by his side, the idea occurred to me to murmur in his ear Rossini's phrase *with the G flat*. Duprez looked me in the face with a slight blush and said:

"Ah, you are criticising me."

"Yes, certainly I am criticising you. Why the deuce don't you give the passage as it is written?"

"I don't know. . . . That note puts me out, it bothers me."

"Come, come, you are joking. How could it possibly put you out, when it does not put out artists who have neither your voice nor your talent?"

"Well, perhaps you are right."

"By Jove! I am quite certain that I am right."

"Very well; for the future I will do the *G flat for you.*"

"Not at all; do it for yourself and for the author, and for the sake of that musical good sense which it is strange to see an artist like yourself sinning against."

Bah! Neither for me, nor for himself, nor for Rossini, nor for music, nor for common sense did Duprez ever do the *G flat* in any representation of *Guillaume Tell.* Neither saints nor devils could make him give up his abominable F. He will die impenitent.

Serda, the bass who had undertaken the Cardinal's part in *Benvenuto Cellini*, maintained that he could not give the E flat in the air, *À tous péchés pleine indulgence;* and transposing that note to the lower octave, he went down by a leap of a sixth instead of going up a third, which absolutely distorted the melody.

One day, as it was impossible for him to attend a rehearsal, Alizard was asked to replace him. The latter, with his magnificent voice, the expressive power and beauty of which had not as yet been recognised, sang my air at sight without the slightest alteration, and in such a manner that the singers who were assembled round him applauded vehemently.

Serda heard of this success, and the next day he found the E flat. Observe that this same Serda, who pretended not to be able to give that note in my air, afterwards attained not merely to the *E natural*, but to the high F sharp in the part of Saint-Bris in the *Huguenots.* What a race these singers are!

To return to the *Freyschütz.*

Of course they wanted to introduce a ballet, and as all my efforts to prevent it were useless, I proposed to com-

pose a choregraphic scene, indicated by Weber himself in his *rondo* for the piano, *Invitation à la Valse*, and I instrumented that charming piece for the orchestra. But the ballet-master, instead of following the plan traced in the music, could invent nothing better than commonplace figures and dull combinations little likely to attract the public. To replace, therefore, quality by quantity, an addition of three other dances was insisted upon. Well, there were the dancers, who took it into their heads that I had some pieces in my symphonies very well suited for dancing, which would finish off the ballet beautifully. They spoke of this to M. Pillet, who fully agreed with them, and asked me to introduce into Weber's score the ball scene out of my *Symphonie Fantastique* and the *fête* from *Romeo and Juliet*.

The German composer, Dessauer, happened to be in Paris at the time, and was a constant frequenter of the side-scenes of the Opéra. To the Director's offer I contented myself by replying:

"I cannot consent to introduce music which is not by Weber into the *Freyschütz;* but to prove to you that it is not from any exaggerated or unreasonable respect for the great master, let us go to Dessauer, who is walking about at the back of the stage, and submit your idea to him: if he approves, I will conform to it; but if not, I beg that you won't mention it again."

At the Director's first words, Dessauer, turning quickly to me, said:

"Oh, Berlioz, don't do that."

"You hear!" I said to M. Pillet; and consequently nothing more was said on the subject. We took the dance-tunes in *Oberon* and *Preciosa*, and the ballet was thus finished off with Weber's own compositions.

But after a few representations, the airs from *Preciosa* and *Oberon* disappeared, then they cut the *Invitation à la Valse* at random, though, when transformed into an orchestral piece, it obtained a very great success. M. Pillet gave up the directorship, and whilst I was in Russia they went so far as to cut off a piece of the *finale* in the third act of the *Freyschütz;* in fact, to suppress, in this same third act, all the first tableau, containing Agatha's sublime prayer, as well as the *Brides-maids' Chorus* and Annette's romantic air for alto solo. And in this dishonourable fashion the *Freyschütz* is given in Paris! This masterpiece of poetry, originality, and passion serves merely as a *lever de rideau* to the most wretched ballets, and has to be mutilated to make room for them. If some new choregraphical work should arise, more developed than its predecessors, they will, without hesitation, clip the *Freyschütz* afresh.

And how they perform what is left of it! What singers! What a conductor! What sleepy indolence in the *tempo!* What discordance in the whole! What a flat, stupid, revolting interpretation of everything by everybody! You have but to be an inventor, a torch-bearer, an inspired man, a genius, to be thus tortured, soiled, and vilified! You coarse salesmen! Till the scourge of a new Christ shall chase you from the temple, be assured that everyone in Europe who has the smallest feeling for Art holds you in the most profound contempt.

CHAPTER LXIII.

he horrors of *feuilleton* writing—M. Delessert, Prefect of Police—Censorship of Concert Programmes established—Hospital Collectors—Dr. Amussat—Journey to Nice—Concerts in the Circus of the Champs Élysées.

My existence after this period presents no musical event worthy of mention. I stayed at Paris, occupied almost entirely by my *métier*, I will not say of critic, but of *feuilletoniste*, a very different thing. The critic only writes if he has an idea, if he wants to air a question, combat a system, bestow blame or praise. Then he has motives, which he believes to be sincere, for expressing his opinion and distributing blame or praise. The unhappy *feuilleton* writer, compelled to write on everything within the domain of his *feuilleton* (a sorry domain, a morass full of toads and grasshoppers !), desires only to accomplish his task. He has often no opinion whatever about the *things* on which he is forced to write; those *things* excite neither his anger nor his admiration—they *do not exist*. And yet he must *seem* to believe in their existence, seem to have a reason for bestowing attention on them, seem to take part either for or against them. Most of my colleagues can extricate themselves, not only without difficulty, but with charming facility, from this embarrassment. As for me, when I do succeed in getting out of it, it is by efforts as tedious as they are painful.

I once remained shut up in my room for three whole days, trying to write a *feuilleton* on the Opéra Comique, and not able even to begin it. I do not recollect the name of the work of which I had to speak (a week after its first representation I had forgotten it for ever), but the tortures I went through during those three days before finding the first three lines of my article, those indeed I can recall. My brain seemed ready to burst; my veins were burning. Sometimes I remained with my elbows on the table, holding my head with both hands. Sometimes I strode up and down, like a soldier on guard in a frost twenty-five degrees below zero. I went to the window, looking out on the neighbouring gardens, the heights of Montmartre, the setting sun . . . and immediately my thoughts carried me a thousand leagues away from that accursed Opéra Comique. And when, on turning round, my eyes fell upon the accursed title inscribed at the head of the accursed sheet of paper, so blank and so obstinately waiting for the other words with which it was to be covered, I felt simply overcome by despair. There was a guitar standing against the table; with one kick I smashed it in the centre. . . . On my chimney two pistols were looking at me with their round eyes. . . . I watched them for a long time. . . . I went so far as to bang my head with my fist. At last, like a schoolboy who cannot do his lesson, I tore my hair and wept with furious indignation. The salt tears seemed slightly to soothe me. The barrels of my pistols were still looking at me, so I turned them to the wall. I took pity on my innocent guitar, and picking it up, tried it with some chords which it gave forth ungrudgingly. At that moment, my little boy knocked at my door. In consequence of my ill-humour, I had scolded him unjustly that

morning. As I did not answer him he called out: "Father, won't you be friends?" I ran to open the door. "Yes, my boy," I said, "let us be friends. Come."

I took him on my knees, I laid his fair head on my shoulder, and we both of us went to sleep. It was the evening of the third day, and I had just given up trying to find a beginning for my article. Next morning I succeeded, I know not how, in writing something, of which I forget both subject and purport. . . .

It is fifteen years since then! . . . and my punishment continues still. Destruction! Always to be at it! Oh, let them give me works to write, orchestras to conduct, rehearsals to direct; let me stand eight or ten hours at a time, baton in hand, training choirs without accompaniments, singing their refrains myself, and beating time till I spit blood and till my arm is paralysed by cramp; let me carry desks, basses, and harps, remove steps, nail planks like a commissionaire or a carpenter, and, as a change, let me correct proofs or copies at night. All this I have done, I do, I will do. It is part of my life as a musician, and I can bear it without a murmur or even a thought, as the sportsman endures cold, heat, hunger, thirst, the sun, rain, dust, mud, and the thousand other fatigues of the chase. But everlastingly to have to write *feuilletons* for one's bread! to write nothings about nothings! to bestow lukewarm praises on insupportable insipidities! to speak one day of a great master and the next of an idiot, with the same gravity, in the same language! to employ one's time, intelligence, courage, and patience at this labour, with the certainty of not even then being able to serve Art by destroying abuses, removing prejudices, enlightening opinion, puri-

fying the public taste, and putting men and things in their proper order and place! This indeed is the lowest depth of degradation! Better be Finance Minister in a republic! Had I but the choice!

I submitted with less resignation than ever to the irksomeness of my position when the Industrial Exhibition took place in Paris in 1844. It was just about to close. Chance (that unknown god who has played so large a part in my life) brought about a meeting between Strauss, the fashionable ball-conductor, and myself. The conversation turned upon the approaching close of the Exhibition, and the possibility of giving a regular festival in honour of the exhibiting manufacturers, in the immense premises so soon to be left vacant.

"I have long thought of it," I said; "but after all my financial calculations have been made, there is one difficulty that hinders me—that of obtaining the use of the premises."

"That is not at all an insurmountable difficulty," replied Strauss promptly. "I know M. Sénac, the Secretary to the Minister of Trade, very well; he directs all affairs connected with French industry, and can put us in the way of carrying out the idea."

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of my friend, I remained rather indifferent. The only agreement we came to before parting was that we should go together the next day to see M. Sénac, and if he gave us the slightest hopes of the building being placed at our disposal, we would go into the matter more seriously.

Without absolutely binding himself when we made our request, M. Sénac did not at all discourage us. He promised a speedy reply, which, in fact, we received a few days later, and which proved favourable. All that

was now needed was the authorisation of M. Delessert, the Prefect of Police.

We acquainted him with our plan, which consisted of a three days' festival in the Exhibition building, to consist of a concert, a ball, and a banquet for the exhibitors. Strauss's idea of having dancing, and eating and drinking after the concert would doubtless have brought us in a great deal of money, but M. Delessert, as Prefect, was constantly possessed with the idea of risings and plots, would hear of neither feast, nor ball, nor music, and in short flatly prohibited the festival.

This prudence appeared to me to savour of absurdity. I spoke about it to M. Bertin, who was of the same opinion, and he took care to tell M. Duchâtel, Minister of the Interior. The latter immediately sent an order to the Prefect to allow us at all events to have the music, and M. Delessert found himself compelled to authorise a grand concert of a serious character for the first day, and a so-called popular concert for the second, under the direction of Strauss, a promenade concert, at which dance music was to be played—waltzes, polkas, and galops—but at which there was to be no dancing. This would have deprived us of the certain profits arising from the undertaking. However, M. Delessert still dreaded the danger which might accrue to the State from our orchestras, our chorus, and the amateurs assembled in the Champs Élysées, too much to listen to us. Who indeed could tell whether Strauss and I were not ourselves conspirators disguised as musicians? . . . However, I was well pleased to be able to organise and conduct a gigantic concert, and limited my desires to a musical success, without risking everything I possessed.

My plan was soon drawn up. Leaving Strauss to

occupy himself with his dancing orchestra, destined to accompany no dancing, I engaged nearly everyone in Paris of any worth, either as a chorus-singer or instrumentalist, for the grand concert, and succeeded in collecting a body of one thousand and twenty-two performers. All were paid, with the exception of the solo singers of the lyrical theatres. To these I had made an appeal in a letter, beseeching them to join my vocal forces, that I might *guide them with soul and voice.*

Duprez, Madame Stoltz, and Chollet alone refused; but their absence was noticed, and severely commented on by the press. Nearly all the members of the Conservatoire concerts likewise thought it their duty to stay away and sulk again with their *old general.* Habeneck, naturally enough, looked upon this grand ceremony, of which *he was not to have the direction,* with a very evil eye.

In order not to raise the expenses to an exorbitant sum, I only asked for two rehearsals, one partial and the other general. I hired Herz's room, and there practised the violins, the tenors and cellos, the basses, the wood-wind instruments, the brass, the harps, the percussion instruments, the women and children of the chorus, and the men successively.

These nine practices, in which each individual only took part once, produced results which would certainly not have been obtained by five general rehearsals. That of the thirty-six double-basses was especially curious. When we came to the *scherzo* of Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, it was like the grunting of about fifty ferocious pigs. Such was the incoherence and want of precision in the performance of this passage. Little by little, however, it got better, the whole went together,

and the phrase came out clearly in all its wild ruggedness.

> D'abord on s'y prit mal, puis un peu mieux, puis bien,
> Puis enfin, il n'y manqua rien.

We repeated it some eighteen or twenty times, which would have been impossible if the whole orchestra had been present. This is the advantage of partial rehearsals. You can pass rapidly over such parts of the programme as present no difficulties to that section of the performers with which you have to do, and, on the other hand, can give all the necessary time and attention to the puzzling and tiresome passages; the only result being extreme fatigue to the conductor. But, as I have already said, I have exceptional strength in such cases, and my endurance rivals that of a cart-horse.

I had, as may be imagined, arranged that my programme should only consist of grand pieces, or such as the performers were already familiar with.

It was as follows:

The overture to the *Vestale* (Spontini).

The prayer from the *Muette* (Auber).

The *scherzo* and *finale* from the Symphony in C minor (Beethoven).

The prayer from *Moïse* (Rossini).

The *Hymne à la France*, which I had composed expressly for the occasion.

The overture to *Freyschütz* (Weber).

The hymn to Bacchus, from *Antigone* (Mendelssohn).

The *March to Execution*, from my *Symphonie Fantastique*.

The *Chant des Industriels*, written for this *fête* by M. Adolphe Dumas, and set to music by M. Méraux.

A chorus from *Charles VI.* (Halévy).

The chorus of the consecration of the poignards, from the *Huguenots* (Meyerbeer).

The pleasure-garden scene from *Armide* (Gluck).

The apotheosis from my *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale.*

We were to have the general rehearsal in the Exhibition building, where I had selected the great central square, known as the machinery hall, for the concert.

The room was not empty even on the evening before this important trial, and the carpenters were still working at my platform. A number of iron machines blocked up the space intended for the public. They had not even taken necessary steps to remove those monstrous implements. I will not attempt to describe my anxiety at the sight.

The walls of Paris were covered with placards announcing the festival. I was bound for a considerable sum, and I found myself arrested in my undertaking by the most insurmountable and unforeseen of obstacles. We could not delay the concert for a day, for the order for demolishing the edifice by the 5th of August had already been given, and the proprietors of the building materials having the right to begin pulling it down on the 1st of August, the day of the first concert, only consented to let it stand a few hours longer for a pecuniary consideration. They were the real masters of the premises, and proved to us in a peremptory manner that the Minister of Trade had lent what did not belong to him. I had a moment of madness, and was about to rush out and have placards posted up to countermand the festival, when Strauss prevented me almost by force, assuring me that fifty carts would clear away the space

next day. As ruin seemed to threaten me from every point, I let things take their course. The next day my thousand performers assembled for the general rehearsal, which took place amid the cries of carters, cracking of whips, and neighing of horses. At last, by the exertions of the carters and the horses, the machinery was carried off and the space left clear, and I breathed more freely. After the rehearsal a fresh nightmare arose. Everyone attacked me, declaring unanimously that the platform must be rebuilt, and that it would be *impossible* to hear a sound from the instruments, because of the chorus being placed in front of the orchestra. Fancy an orchestra of five hundred instruments *not being heard!* Sixty workmen immediately set to work and cut the platform into two; they then lowered the front portion, reserved for the chorus, by ten feet, thus bringing into view the orchestra, the back part of which was also raised. This new arrangement allowed the instruments to be heard, notwithstanding the want of sonority in the hall, an irremediable and undeniable defect.

No sooner had this second cause for anxiety disappeared, than a third, no less serious, presented itself. Strauss and I, profiting by a few hours' respite which we managed to snatch from all this uproar, rushed off in a cab to the various music-sellers who held the concert tickets, in order to find out what sort of a sale they had had. After adding everything up, we discovered to our horror that the amount, twelve thousand francs, would not defray half of our general expenses. All we could reckon on would be an extraordinary receipt at the doors next day, and if it failed we must be prepared to make up the deficit. The night we both passed after this discovery!

But no withdrawal was possible. The next day (August 1st), I got to the Exhibition building about noon. The concert was announced for one. The first thing I noticed, with a delight to which I did not dare to give vent, was the extraordinary number of carriages converging towards the centre of the Champs Élysées. I went in and found everything in perfect order, my instructions having been carried out to the letter. The musicians, singers, and sub-conductors of orchestra and chorus were quietly taking their places. With a glance I consult my librarian, M. Rocquement, a man of rare intelligence and indefatigable activity, whose friendship for me is as sincere as mine for him. He assures me that the music is all ready, and that *nothing is wanting*. Then the musical fever begins to rush through my veins. I think no more either of the public, the receipts, or the deficit. I was just about to give the signal for beginning the overture, when a violent noise was heard of cracking wood, accompanied by a prolonged howl. This was the crowd breaking down a barrier and bursting into the hall.

"Just look at the inundation!" said one of the musicians, showing me how the room was filling. "We are saved!" cried I, striking my desk with the baton in greater delight than I had ever done before. "Now we shall do something fine."

We begin. The introduction to the *Vestale* unfolds its grand periods, and from this moment the majesty, power, and unanimity of the immense vocal and instrumental body became more and more remarkable. My thousand and twenty-two artists went all together, like the performers in a first-rate quartet. I had two sub-conductors; Tilmant, of the Opéra Comique, who led the wind instruments, and my friend Auguste Morel, now Director of the

Conservatoire at Marseilles, in command of the percussion instruments. I had also five choirmasters, one in the centre and the others at the four corners of the choral body. To these was entrusted the task of conveying my movements to those singers who were unable to observe them in consequence of having their backs turned to me. Thus there were seven conductors, who never lost sight of me for a moment, and our eight arms, although far removed from each other, rose and fell simultaneously with incredible precision. Hence the miraculous unanimity which so astonished the public.

The most effective pieces were as follows: The overture to the *Freyschütz*, the *Andante* played by twenty-four horns; the prayer from *Moïse* (encored), in which the twenty-five harpists, instead of playing the *arpeggios* in simple notes, played them in chords in four parts, and, by thus quadrupling the number of the strings, gave the effect of a hundred harps; the *Hymne à la France*, likewise encored, but not repeated; and, lastly, the chorus of the consecration of the poignards, from the *Huguenots*, which literally electrified the audience. I had multiplied the soli of this sublime piece by twenty, and consequently there were eighty bass voices for the parts of the three monks and of Saint-Bris. The impression it made on the performers and those nearest to the orchestra exceeded anything hitherto experienced. As for me, I was seized with a fit of nervous trembling, and my teeth chattered as though I were in a violent fever. Notwithstanding the acoustic defects of the place, I do not think that such an effect in music has often been produced, and I regretted that Meyerbeer was not present. This terrible piece, which one might say had been written with electric fluid, by a gigantic galvanic

pile, seemed to be accompanied by thunder-claps and sung by tempests.

I was in such a state after this scene that the concert had to be stopped for some time. They brought me some punch and a change of clothes. Then they formed a kind of little room on the platform itself, by putting together a dozen harps in their linen cases, and by slightly stooping I was able to undress and even change my shirt, in the very face of the public, without being seen.

Of the remaining pieces, the most successful were the *Oraison Funèbre* and the *Apotheosis* from my *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale* (the solo trombone played with remarkable talent by Dieppo), and the scene from *Armide*, which gave great delight by its voluptuous calmness.

The *March to Execution*, the instrumentation of which is so noisy and the effect so spirited in an ordinary concert-room, seemed quite muffled and feeble in sound, as also did the *scherzo* and *finale* from Beethoven's Symphony in C minor. Mendelssohn's *Hymn to Bacchus* sounded dull and heavy ; one of the papers, a few days later, said that the priests of this Bacchus had doubtless imbibed beer instead of Cyprus-wine.[1]

The *Chant des Industriels* was very badly received, especially by the performers. I had engaged to compose the music for Adolphe Dumas' words, but could not possibly manage it, and was obliged to consent to their being set by any composer he chose. He named his brother-in-law, Amédée Mereaux. The overture to the *Vestale* was warmly applauded, as also the unaccompanied chorus from the *Muette*. As for the song from Halévy's *Charles VI.*, which I had introduced as an after-thought into the

[1] [Lager-beer is probably a good deal better than the best Cyprus.]

programme at the request of Schlesinger, who published the work, its effect was peculiar. It awoke that senseless spirit of resistance always fermenting in the Parisian mob, and at the well-known refrain,

> Guerre aux tyrans, jamais en France,
> Jamais l'Anglais ne régnera !

three-fourths of the audience began to sing. It was a plebeian protest of grotesque nationalism against the then policy of Louis Philippe, and seemed to give some grounds for the objections of the Prefect of Police. This absurd incident had consequences of which I shall have to speak presently.

Thus my *Musical Exhibition* took place, not merely without drawbacks, but with brilliant success, and the applause of an immense audience. On going out, I had the pleasant satisfaction of seeing the *toll-gatherers of the hospital dues* busied in counting the sum total of the receipts at a huge table. It amounted to thirty-two thousand francs. Of this sum they took the eighth part, viz., *four thousand francs*. The receipts of the dance-music conducted by my partner, Strauss, two days after, were so scanty, and the *fête* itself so far from successful, that we had to make up the deficiency from the profits of the concert, and the upshot of all my trouble and risk in accomplishing so great a labour was a net profit of eight hundred francs out of the four thousand handed me by the hospital collectors.

Charming land of liberty, whose artists are serfs, receive their sincere benediction, and their admiring homage for thine *equal*, *noble*, and *liberal* laws !

Scarcely had Strauss and I paid off our musicians, copyists, printers, masons, slaters, joiners, carpenters,

upholsterers, officials, and inspectors, when the Prefect of Police, who had charged us the modest sum of one thousand two hundred and thirty-eight francs for his agents and municipal guards (the police service for the Opéra only costs eighty francs), summoned us to his office on pressing business.

"What is it about?" asked Strauss. "Have you any idea?"

"Not the slightest."

"Does M. Delessert feel remorse at having charged such an exorbitant sum for his useless agents? Is he going to return us some of the money?"

"Oh, very likely indeed!"

We reached the Prefecture of the Police.

"Sir," said M. Delessert, addressing himself to me, "I regret to have to make you a serious reproach."

"What for?" replied I, in utter astonishment.

"You secretly introduced into your programme a piece calculated to excite those political passions which the Government is endeavouring to repress and extinguish. I allude to the chorus from *Charles VI.*, which did not appear at all in the first announcement of the festival. The Minister of the Interior has reason to be much displeased at the manifestations it provoked, and I entirely agree with him on the subject."

"Sir," I answered, with all possible calmness, "you are completely mistaken. It is true that the chorus from *Charles VI.* did not appear in my first programme; but hearing that M. Halévy was hurt at the absence of his name, I consented, by his publisher's wish, to admit the chorus from *Charles VI.*, on account of its facility of performance by a large body of musicians. This reason alone decided my choice. I do not in the smallest degree sympathis

with a national outbreak in 1844, about a scene of the time of Charles VI.; and so little did I think of introducing the piece into my programme clandestinely, that its title figured in the playbills for more than a week, and that moreover those playbills were affixed to the very walls of this Prefecture. Let me beg of you, sir, to entertain no doubt on this point, and to disabuse the mind of the Minister of the Interior."

M. Delessert, slightly embarrassed by his own blunder, declared himself satisfied with my explanation, and even went so far as to excuse himself for having reproached me unjustly. Nevertheless, from that day forth the censorship of concert programmes was established; and no one can now sing a song by Birat or Mdlle. Puget in public, without a permit from the Minister of the Interior, *visée* by a Commissioner of the Police.

I had just brought this mad enterprise to a conclusion —an enterprise which I should take good care not to undertake now—when my old anatomy-master and kind friend, Dr. Amussat, called on me. At sight of me he fell back a step or two.

"Hallo! what's the matter with you, Berlioz? You are as yellow as an old parchment. You look uncommonly irritated and exhausted."

"You talk of irritation," said I. "Why should I be irritated? You attended the festival; you know what took place there. I have had the pleasure of paying away four thousand francs to the hospital collectors. I have eight hundred francs left. What have I to complain of? It's all right, isn't it?"

Amussat (feeling my pulse): "My dear fellow, you are on the verge of a typhoid fever. You must be bled."

"Very well, don't put it off till to-morrow. Bleed me now!"

I took off my coat immediately. Amussat bled me freely, and said:

"Now be kind enough to leave Paris as quickly as possible. Go to Hyères—Cannes—Nice—where you will; but go south, and breathe sea air, and think no more of all these things that are inflaming your blood and over-exciting your nervous system, which is quite irritable enough already. It is not a case for delay, so good-bye."

I took his advice, and went to Nice for a month—thanks to the eight hundred francs from the festival—to try as far as possible to repair the injury done to my health.

Not without emotion did I behold again the places I had known thirteen years before, on the occasion of another convalescence, when I first went to Italy.[1] . . .

I swam a great deal in the sea; made numerous excursions in the environs of Nice, Villefranche, Beaulieu, Cimiés, and Phare. I resumed my explorations of the rocks on the sea-shore, where I found my old acquaintances the cannon still sleeping in the sun. I saw once more the fresh and smiling little creeks, carpeted with soft seaweed, where I had formerly bathed. The room in which I had written the overture to *King Lear*, in 1831, was occupied by an English family, so I established myself in a tower built against the rock of the Ponchettes, just above the house.

There I enjoyed with delight the exquisite view of the Mediterranean, and a calm that I valued more than ever. Then, having been cured after a fashion of my jaundice,

[1] See vol. i. p. 178.

and having spent my eight hundred francs, I left the fascinating Sardinian coast, and returned to Paris to resume my Sisyphean labours.

Some months after this journey, the director of the Franconi Theatre, tempted by the extraordinary receipts from the Industrial Festival, proposed that I should give a grand series of musical performances in his circus at the Champs Élysées. I do not recollect our arrangement; I only know that it turned out badly for him. There were four concerts, for which we engaged five hundred musicians, and the expenses of this enormous *personnel* were not entirely defrayed by the receipts. The room, moreover, was worthless for musical purposes. The sound rolled slowly about the circle of the building in a maddening manner, causing a most deplorable confusion of harmony in even the most slightly intricate composition. One piece alone produced a great effect, and that was the *Dies Iræ* from my Requiem. The grandeur of its chords and measure made it less out of place than anything else in this vast enclosure, which resounded like a church, and its success obliged us to include it in the programme of each of the concerts.

This undertaking was by no means a lucrative one, and quite wearied me out. I had a fresh opportunity for recovering my health on the beneficent shores of the Mediterranean, thanks to two concerts I was persuaded to give at Marseilles and Lyons, the proceeds of which were at any rate sufficient for my travelling expenses. I was thus enabled for the first time to hear my own compositions in some of the French provinces.

The letters I addressed to my coadjutor Edouard Monnais, in the *Gazette Musicale* in 1848, notwithstanding their somewhat comic tone, give an exact account of all

my adventures on this excursion, and of another which I made shortly afterwards to Lille. They are to be found under the title of "Correspondance Académique," in my book, *Les Grotesques de la Musique.*

Some months later I went for the first time through Southern Germany—Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia. The following letters to my friend Humbert Ferrand, from the *Journal des Débats*, give an account of my travels there.

SECOND VISIT TO GERMANY.

(AUSTRIA—BOHEMIA—HUNGARY.)

CHAPTER LXIV.

Vienna.

LETTER I.—TO MONSIEUR HUMBERT FERRAND.

I HAVE again returned from Germany, my dear Humbert, and no sooner am I back than I feel compelled to give you an account of all my doings there. You have so often sustained me in the heat of the struggle, buoyed me up in discouragement, reassured me about the future by comparing it with the past; you have so keen and noble a feeling for the beautiful, so profound a veneration for the true, such a conviction of the power and greatness of art, that the account of my adventures, discoveries, and experiences in Europe will, I hope, interest you, and could not possibly be given to a more sympathetic and intelligent mind than your own. Notwithstanding the serious passions preoccupying your heart, and in spite of your labours in that sweet retreat with which royal benevolence has provided you, I know that you never forget either poetry or music for a single day. Your love for those two heavenly sisters is too deep and pure ever to

swerve; and I am sure that, from the summit of your island mountains, you often lend an ear to the musical and literary murmurs wafted from Paris. And yet how sad and mournful Paris seems to me, especially since this last trip! And in these stifling dog-days, how I envy you your perfumed reveries under the great orange-groves in the island of Sardinia, the nightly harmonies of the Mediterranean, and even the simple songs of your Sardinian labourers, the Africans of Europe, the ancients of the present day! "Non nobis Deus hæc otia fecit."

I find our capital again absorbed with material interests, indifferent to all that is dear to the poet and the artist, devoted to scandal and banter, and laughing sarcastically whenever that strange taste is satisfied. Again I feel the smell of its infernal asphalte-boilers, the acrid odours of its bad excise cigars, its bored countenances and boring faces, discouraged artists, wearied men of understanding, swarms of fools, extenuated, starving, dying, or defunct theatres; the same barrel-organ coming, as it was wont, at the same hour, to play the same everlasting old tune! I hear the same barbarous opinions put forth and defended, the same barbarous men and works extolled.

In fact, on the whole, things seem rather gloomy, besides which, I am not in a mood to see things with rose-coloured spectacles. Do you recollect the utter melancholy that used to afflict us in our youthful time, the day after the ball? A certain uneasiness of soul, a vague suffering of heart, an objectless sorrow, causeless regrets, ardent aspirations towards the unknown, an inexpressible restlessness of the whole being—that was what we felt. I am ashamed to confess it, but that is what I feel. I feel as if it were the day after a great *fête*, given in my honour by strangers.

I miss the great orchestras; the grand chorus, full of ardour and devotion, which I used daily to have such delight in conducting; I miss that courteous, brilliant, attentive, and enthusiastic public; I miss those impetuous emotions experienced at a great concert, when I address myself to the crowd, through the thousand voices of orchestra and chorus; I miss the study of the various impressions made on an unprejudiced audience by the recent attempts of modern art. In a word, I feel so wretched from this stagnation after so much harmonious movement, that since my return I have been possessed by one idea day and night—that of embarking on board a ship, and going round the world. And just as though fate also were conspiring against my good resolutions, whom should it have thrown in my way yesterday to tempt me by his example but one of my old friends, Halma, the virtuoso, who has just come straight from Canton. You may guess how I questioned him about all the places he had visited—China, the Malay islands, Cape Horn, the Brazils, Chili, Peru—and with what avidity I examined all the curious things he had brought back! My heart came into my mouth, and if I had been a king I should certainly have parodied Richard III. and cried, "My kingdom for a ship!"

But having neither ship nor kingdom, I remain in this little town, which extends, as our charming poet Méry says, from the Rue du Mont Blanc to the Faubourg Montmartre, and is called Paris; and there I walk about of an evening, repeating this line of *Ruy Blas* in every imaginable key and to every imaginable rhythm:

Ah, ça! mais on s'ennuie horriblement ici!

Happily the proverb is not wrong, "L'ennui porte

conseil;" it suggested to me a way of forgetting Paris without leaving it. It is to revisit in thought all the distant parts where I have travelled, the foreign artists I have known, the great buildings I have seen, the institutions I have studied; in one word, to write to you, choosing, however, a time when I am free from spleen, in order not to weary you more than I can possibly help. But how do I know that you will even read my letter? Methinks I see you slumbering beneath the shade of a grove of citron-trees, like the happy old man of whom the Roman poet speaks, to the sweet murmur of the busy bees who are plundering the flowers around you. A Virgil or Horace lies open in your hand, that immortal poetry is rocking your slumbers, and you will not care for my prose. Fortunately, I know a way of awakening you without incurring your reproaches. Listen. I am going to tell you something of Gluck—Gluck, do you hear?—of his country, which I have just visited; and of Mozart, and Haydn, and Beethoven, who, like Gluck, all lived at Vienna. . . . I knew well that those magical names would make you forgive my unseasonable summons. Now to begin.

Only two striking souvenirs remain of my journey from Paris to Vienna, one being a violent pain (not a mental pain, so look for no romance; only a very prosaic pain in the side), which forced me to stop at Nancy, where I thought I should have died; not so very wonderful an incident, seeing that in truth we live but to die. And the other, a divinity whom I saw through the window of an inn at Augsburg. The worthy man, who has just founded a sort of Neo-Christianity already somewhat in vogue in Bavaria and Saxony, was getting into his carriage, when the innkeeper, pale with emotion, pointed

him out to me. I have forgotten his name, but he seemed to me to have a lively, intelligent face, and in fact looked rather a good sort of fellow.

This journey, made, like my Italian travels, in a carriage, was all the more tedious because the last steamboat had left Ratisbon before I arrived, and being obliged to stay two days in that large little town, was heart-broken at being slowly wheeled along the banks of the Danube as far as Lintz, instead of rapidly descending the current of the stream in a cloud. How many centuries separate these two methods of travelling? On leaving Ratisbon, I could have believed myself to be a contemporary of Frederick Barbarossa; at Lintz, as soon as I set foot on the deck of a swift and graceful steamboat, I found myself once more in the year 1845.

The names of those two towns recall an observation I have often made about our senseless mania for distorting and changing the names of places, when translating them from one language to another. For example, we say Londres, instead of London; and what business have the Italians to say Parigi, instead of Paris? I had a map of Germany which I frequently consulted on this journey. I found out Lintz easily enough, because in France we are kind enough to write and pronounce the name as the Germans do; but I never could make out Ratisbon, for the simple reason that the name is an invention and has no likeness whatever to Regensburg, the real name of the town I was looking for.

We honour certain names, and those the most difficult to pronounce, by preserving them intact. Others we distort without knowing why. We say Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt, the kingdom of Wurtemberg, quite correctly; and the next moment we say Bavière

for Baiern, Munich for München, Danube for Donau, Anvers for Antwerpen, Gand for Ghent, Liège for Lüttich. But at least there is some distant resemblance between these French translations and the original names, whereas there is none whatever between Regensburg and Ratisbon. And yet we should think it extremely absurd of the Germans if they took it into their heads to call Lyons, Mittenberg, and Paris, Triffenstein.[1]

On landing at Vienna, I very soon discovered the passion of the Austrians for music. One of the custom-house officers, whilst examining the luggage from the steamboat, caught sight of my name, and immediately exclaimed (in French, be it understood):

"Where is he? Where is he?"

"Sir, here I am."

"Oh, good heavens, M. Berlioz, what has happened to you? We have been expecting you for the last week. Your departure from Paris, and your approaching concerts at Vienna, have been advertised in all our papers. We were quite uneasy at not seeing you."

I thanked the worthy official with all my heart, saying to myself that most certainly I should never occasion such uneasiness to the officers at the *octroi* of Paris.

No sooner was I established in this gay city than I was invited to attend the first annual concert at the Riding School. It is given for the benefit of the Conservatoire, and the immense body of performers, more than a thousand in number, is almost entirely composed of amateurs. As the Government does little or nothing to support the Conservatoire, it is but right that the true friends of

[1] [This *badinage* is poor enough; the changes in proper names afford some of the most interesting problems in comparative philology, and have always a good reason at the bottom of them.]

music should come to its assistance. But just for that very reason I was profoundly astonished by it. At the same time each year the Emperor places this immense hall at the disposal of the Society of Amateurs. Lists are opened for the inscription of the performers' names, and so great is the number of skilled amateurs at Vienna, both vocalists and instrumentalists, that more than five hundred have to be refused, and there is a real difficulty in selecting the chorus of six hundred, and the orchestra of four hundred performers. The receipts from these gigantic concerts (there are always two) are very large, as the hall is capable of seating nearly four thousand people, notwithstanding the immense space taken up by the raised stage for the performers. The room is full for the first concert; but the second is not so well attended, the programme being only a recapitulation of the first. Are the Viennese, then, unable to hear the same *chefs d'œuvre* twice in a week without being bored? . . .

In this respect nearly all audiences are alike. It is true that the programmes of these musical festivals are almost always made from the best known works of the old masters, and the public would probably attend a second concert with no less eagerness than the first, provided they were likely to hear some new work composed expressly for so immense a body of performers. And this, indeed, would be a musical proposition of great interest. No doubt grand music like the oratorios of Handel, Bach, Haydn, and Beethoven gains very much by being thus performed; but after all, in this case it is only a question of more or less doubling the parts, whereas a composer writing for such a colossal orchestra and choir, and acquainted with their manifold resources, would inevitably produce something as novel in detail as it

would be grand in its entirety. This has never yet been done. In all works considered as monumental, the form and tissue are alike. They produce a pompous effect in huge halls, but would not lose much if heard in a far smaller room, with fewer performers. They do not absolutely demand an unusual number of voices or instruments, which may, indeed, give a more marked emphasis to the music, but produce no effect that is either remarkable or unforeseen. Still, I must admit that I was much impressed by this concert, more especially by the choral effects. The soprano voices were of surpassing beauty, and the general effect first-rate. When I saw the overture to Mozart's *Magic Flute* in the programme, I was afraid that that wonderful piece, the time of which is so rapid, and the development so full and delicate, could not be properly played by so vast an orchestra, composed entirely of amateurs; but my anxiety did not last long, and it was executed with a precision and *verve* rarely found among artists.

The programme consisted of one of Mozart's motets, another by Haydn, an air from the *Creation*, the overture just mentioned, and Beethoven's oratorio of the *Mount of Olives*. Staudigl and Madame Barthe-Hasselt sang the solos. Staudigl's bass is velvety and impressive, at once sweet and powerful, more than two octaves in compass (from the low E to the high G), which he gives without the slightest effort, filling even so immense a room as the Riding School. His voice is a most touching one, though he himself is in general but little moved; it penetrates and charms you. Moreover, Staudigl, though he sings with simple good taste, has also a great facility in execution. In short, he is a thorough musician, and reads anything you give him at first sight with an im-

perturbable *aplomb* that is sometimes quite provoking. He is rather inclined to gratify his self-love by parading this accomplishment, and never, therefore, so much as looks over a piece he is not bound to sing by heart, until he presents himself before the orchestra. Accordingly, at a general rehearsal, he takes his book, at which he has not yet glanced, and sings off both words and music without a mistake either of word or note. He reads it as if it were a book that had been put into his hands for the first time, but he never reads it any better, and that is just what is indispensable at a general rehearsal, where not only literal exactness, but also an intelligent and animated execution of the composer's work is required. But how is a performer to put this fire, and soul, and life into his reading when he has prepared nothing beforehand, and knows nothing of the general spirit, the *nuances*, or even the time of the composition? This slight criticism, not so much of the talent as of the habits of this great artist, was made in Vienna in my hearing by composers who had often been annoyed by it on important occasions. Louis XVIII. used to say: "Il ne faut pas être plus royaliste que le roi." One might say to Staudigl: "One must not try to be more of a musician than the music."

Staudigl is at once the manager and the first singer of the Theatre an-der-Wien, which is so well directed by M. Pockorny. His magnificent bass voice, in spite of the exquisite beauty of its tone, is not one of those delicate organs requiring hygienic precautions and special régime. So far from this, he can hunt for days together in the snow, in the coldest weather, bare-necked, and return in the evening to sing the part of Bertram, Marcel, or Gaspard without the slightest difficulty. This Theatre an-der-Wien, so called because it stands on the little river of that

name, was opened scarcely three years ago, and is already paying well enough to give grave cause for uneasiness to its rival, the Kärntnerthor Theatre.[1] Nearly all the celebrated artists who desire to be known in Vienna go to it. Pischek made his *début* there in the winter of 1846, and Jenny Lind some time afterwards; and heaven only knows the fury of enthusiasm which they excited, and the fortunes they made.

The chorus, though by no means numerous, has a good deal of force; it is composed almost entirely of young men and women with fresh, fine-toned voices. They are not all very good readers. The orchestra, which I had heard much abused from the moment of my arrival, cannot certainly be put on a level with that of the Kärntnerthor Theatre, of which I shall speak presently; but it does very well notwithstanding, and the young artists composing it are full of that ardour and goodwill which occasionally work miracles. In the singing *troupe*, I remarked one woman whose talent for tender and impassioned parts was of a most superior order, and I am sorry that I cannot tell you her name, which has escaped me in spite of all my efforts to recall it. She excelled in the part of Agatha, in the *Freyschütz*.

I must also mention Mademoiselle Treffz, a graceful cantatrice, and Mademoiselle Marra, the prima donna, whose talent is at once striking and attractive; her voice, though not well adapted to certain vocalisations, is both light and brilliant, but unfortunately she is a very poor musician, and consequently sometimes makes such serious blunders in the time as to put out an entire piece, not-

[1] [The Theatre an-der-Wien may have been reopened at the date given by Berlioz; but it existed at the time of ozart, and, in fact, the *Zauberflöte* was brought out there.]

withstanding all the conductor's care and skill. Mademoiselle Marra excels in Donizetti's *Lucia;* she has had a great success this winter in the north of Germany, and in some Russian towns.

But the tenors! the tenors! Ah, there is the weak side of this theatre, as of nearly every theatre in the world nowadays; and I am very much afraid that, in spite of all his efforts, M. Pockorny will not find it easy to fill up this gap in his *personnel* of singers.

In this respect the Kärntnerthor is more fortunate; it has Erl, a high tenor, somewhat cold, better in calm scenes than in passionate ones, and in purely musical rather than dramatic singing. This theatre is managed by an Italian, one M. Balochino, whose administration is severely criticised both by the city and the court, by artists and amateurs. I cannot understand their motives for this abuse; its effect seemed to me to be to keep the public away from the theatre, notwithstanding the intelligent efforts of the eminent artist[1] Nicolaï, who manages the musical department, with which M. Balochino, in his capacity of manager, is unacquainted. It is something to be thankful for that M. Balochino has not engaged tailors to play the double-bass, but has engaged violinists for the violins. In France we are still under the cruel necessity of employing musicians to make music, but we are busily trying to solve the problem which will permit us to do without them.

Besides a very deep and sonorous bass, M. Balachino has another singer in his *troupe* whom I mentioned above, Madame Barthe-Hasselt. Her talent is of the very first order, both from a musical and dramatic point of view.

[1] [Otto Nicolaï, known in England as the composer of the *Merry Wives of Windsor.*]

Her voice is slightly gone off, but is of a large compass, of uncommon power, very true, and with a most touching tone, which may be the result of its being slightly veiled. I heard Madame Hasselt sing the difficult and beautiful soprano scene in *Oberon* in a most triumphant manner, and I do not believe that one prima donna in a hundred could have interpreted that fervid page of Weber's with such fidelity, boldness, fire, and grandeur. At the close of the last *allegro*, after the burst of delight from Huon's beloved, there was a perfect struggle between the singer and the orchestra. Madame Hasselt came out of it with honour; her ringing voice prevailed above the tempest of instruments and seemed to defy it, without, however, letting one doubtful or exaggerated tone escape her. The impression left upon me by this scene from *Oberon* thus performed in a concert-room was one of the most powerful I ever recollect. Some time afterwards I had an opportunity of recognising Madame Hasselt's merit as a tragedian, in Nicolaï's opera *Il Proscritto*, the last act of which is in every respect admirable, and to my mind exalts Nicolaï to a high rank among composers. In this opera, taken from one of Frederick Soulié's dramas, there is a woman who, under the belief that her husband has died in exile, marries a man whom she loves; and on the return of her first husband, whom she respects without having ever really loved, she is compelled to leave the second in order to return to him. Her strength is not sufficient for so terrible an ordeal. To escape from it, the unhappy woman poisons herself, after having reconciled the two rivals, and dies pressing their united hands to her heart. Madame Hasselt plays and sings this part like a consummate lyric tragedian, and I found in her all those fine emotions and clever calculations, combined

with sudden inspirations, which made Madame Branchu's just renown in France forty years ago.

Alas! my dear Humbert, these great tragic singers are disappearing, one by one, like the tenors, and without them the lyrical drama is lost. Judging by the ever-increasing scarcity of artists capable of reproducing the great and noble passions of the human heart by means of our art, it would seem as if those passions were an invention of poets and musicians, and as if nature, having created certain exceptional beings capable of understanding and expressing them, looked upon them as luxuries altogether out of the reach of the human race, and refused from henceforth to supply any more.

H. B.

CHAPTER LXV.

Vienna.

Letter II.—To Monsieur Humbert Ferrand.

When I said that dramatic female singers were becoming as scarce as tenors, and that nature was apparently unwilling to produce any more, I did not mean that powerful soprano voices of large compass were, like real tenors, priceless gems. No. Fine and even well-trained female voices are still to be found; but of what use are those organs, if not directed by feeling, intelligence, and inspiration? It was of real dramatic talent that I was speaking. We shall always find a fair number of female singers, popular from their brilliant singing of brilliant trifles, and odious to the great masters because utterly incapable of properly interpreting them. They have voices, a certain knowledge of music, and flexible throats; they are lacking in soul, brain, and heart. Such women are regular monsters, and all the more formidable to composers that they are often charming monsters. This explains the weakness of certain masters in writing falsely sentimental parts, which attract the public by their brilliancy. It also explains the number of degenerate works, the gradual degradation of style, the destruction of all sense of expression, the neglect of

dramatic proprieties, the contempt for the true, the grand, and the beautiful, and the cynicism and decrepitude of art in certain countries.

I have not yet told you of the orchestra or chorus of the Kärntnerthor Theatre. Both are first-class; the orchestra especially, selected, drilled, and led by Nicolaï, may be equalled but cannot be surpassed. Besides its *aplomb*, *verve*, and great mechanical skill, this orchestra has an exquisite sonorousness, owing doubtless to the accurate way in which the instruments play together, as much as to the perfect manner in which they play in tune. No one knows how rare this is, nor what disasters may be produced in even the best orchestra by any imperfection of time. The Kärntnerthor band can accompany a singer in any style, can lead when it has the principal part, its *forte* is never noisy unless the composer has intended it to be so. In the opera, it is perfect; in the symphony, triumphant; and, finally, to conclude my panegyric, it contains none of those conceited artists who resent just criticism, regard a comparison between themselves and foreign virtuosi as an insult, and believe themselves to be doing an honour to Beethoven when they condescend to play him.

Nicolaï has enemies at Vienna. It is a pity for the Viennese, for I regard him as one of the best orchestral leaders I ever met. He is one of those men whose influence alone suffices to bestow a marked musical superiority on the town in which they live, when provided with the necessary opportunities. He possesses three qualities indispensable to a finished conductor. He is a learned composer, skilled and enthusiastic, he has a strong feeling for rhythm, and his mode of conducting is perfectly clear and exact; in short, he is an ingenious

and indefatigable organiser, grudging neither time nor trouble at rehearsals; one who knows what he is doing because he only does what he knows. Hence the excellent qualities, moral and material, the confidence, devotion, patience, marvellous assurance and unity of action of the Kärntnerthor orchestra.

The intellectual concerts, organised and conducted annually by Nicolaï, in the Salle des Redoutes, form a fit pendant to our Conservatoire concerts in Paris. There I heard that scene from *Oberon*, of which I told you in my last letter, together with the air from *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Unis dès la plus tendre enfance*, rather drearily sung by Erl, a fine symphony by Nicolaï, and Beethoven's marvellous and matchless one in B flat. All this was performed with that impassioned fidelity, finish in the details, and power in the whole, which to my mind make such an orchestra, so conducted, the finest product of modern art, and the most genuine representative of what we call *music*.

In this vast and beautiful hall, Beethoven's *chefs d'œuvre* — now worshipped throughout Europe — when performed some thirty years ago, were received by the Viennese with the most profound contempt. Count Michel Wielhorski told me he was one of fifty who attended the performance of the Symphony in A, in 1820. At that time the Viennese were thronging to Salieri's operas! Poor pigmies, to whom a giant had been born! They preferred people of their own size.

You may imagine, my dear Humbert, that my legs trembled under me when I stepped for the first time on the platform formerly trodden by his mighty foot. Nothing had been changed since Beethoven's time. The conductor's desk of which I made use had once been

his; there was the place occupied by the piano on which he used to improvise; he descended those steps leading to the artists' green-room, when certain far-seeing enthusiasts, after the performance of his immortal poems, gave themselves the delight of recalling him amidst transports of applause, to the utter astonishment of the rest of the audience, who had been brought there by idle curiosity, and could see nothing in the sublime outbursts of his genius but the convulsive movements and brutal eccentricities of a delirious imagination. Some secretly approved of the enthusiasts, but dared not join them. They did not wish to come into collision with public opinion. They must wait. And, meanwhile, Beethoven suffered.[1]

The great Salle des Redoutes is very good for music. It is a parallelogram, but the angles do not produce an echo. There is only a pit and a gallery. It was at one of my concerts there that the celebrated singer Pischek first sang at Vienna. I was enchanted by his proposal, having known and admired him at Frankfort three years before. He chose for this occasion one of Uhland's ballads, entitled, *Des Sängers Fluch*, set to music by Esser, which suited him admirably. As it had a piano accompaniment, I begged of Seymour-Schiff, a clever and spirited German pianist, to play it; to which Seymour-Schiff, like a true artist, agreed. Accordingly, we went to Pischek's to rehearse. I need hardly say it was not one of those musical baubles to which we Parisians give the name of ballad. Uhland's is a poem of some length, grandly treated; and Esser's work, which is essentially varied, powerful, and dramatic, after the manner of Schubert, in no way resembles our little couplets, more or less veneered with Gothic

[1] [This is almost entire invention.]

polish. I cannot tell you, my dear Humbert, the impression Pischek's incomparable voice and thrilling *verve* made upon me. The progress he had made in three years was simply astounding. It was a kind of intoxication, something like that which Duprez created in the public at the Opéra, the day he made his *début* in *Guillaume Tell*. You can have no idea of the beauty of that baritone, the force and amplitude of the chest notes, the exquisite sweetness of the high ones, and its flexibility and power. Moreover, the compass is considerable, embracing two octaves in pure chest voice, from the low to the high A flat. And what a fervent inspiration animates it! What passion—sometimes skilfully kept in, sometimes bursting forth without restraint. In listening to Pischek, how quickly we recognise the artist—the true musician. He stirs and calms his hearers at will; fascinates and carries them away. The enthusiasm with which he sang his ballad infected me from the very first bar; I felt myself blushing up to the eyes, my veins throbbed as if they would burst, and I exclaimed, almost mad with delight: "There is Don Juan; there is Romeo; there is Cortez!" Moreover, Pischek is greatly favoured as regards his appearance; he is tall and well made, his countenance is full of life and animation. He is a bold reader, an excellent pianist, and sufficiently expert in counterpoint to improvise with ease in the fugue style on any theme offered. It is really deplorable, for the sake of our Paris Opéra, that he does not know a word of French. He was born at Prague in 1810, and I believe the first language he spoke was Bohemian; afterwards he learnt German, then Italian; now he is studying English, in which language he will sing this winter in London.

His success in Esser's ballad at my concert was spon-

taneous and universal. A romance, which he also sang, to his own accompaniment, at the request of the public, put the finishing touch to their frenzy of delight; and, in fact, nothing more delicious could possibly have been heard. A few days later he appeared at the An-der-Wien Theatre, first in Lortzing's *Zimmermann*,[1] then in the *Puritani*, where the famous duet gave him an opportunity of competing with Standigl. He was about to play *Don Juan* when I left for Prague. I regretted keenly not being able to hear him in that part, of which I am convinced he is the ideal personified. There were, however, many among the highest Viennese authorities who criticised Pischek severely for affectation and mannerisms in his way of singing. I confess that I never observed anything to merit so grave a reproach, which, for that matter, has also often been incurred by Rubini. And I repeat that if Pischek could learn French, and a part at once brilliant and impassioned were written for him, he would bring down the house at the Opéra, and the Parisians would be his slaves.

The Salle des Redoutes derives its name from the great balls[2] often given there during the winter season. There the Viennese youth abandons itself to its passion for dancing, a very real and delightful passion, which has led the Austrians to make a regular art of drawing-room dancing, as far above the routine of our balls as the orchestra and waltzes of Strauss are superior to the polkas and strummers in the dancing-saloons of Paris. I have passed whole nights watching thousands of incomparable waltzers whirling about, and admiring the choregraphical

[1] [*Czaar und Zimmermann*, "Czar and Carpenter," an episode in the life of Peter the Great.]

[2] *Redoutes, Ridotti.*

order of the country dances, composed of two hundred persons in two ranks, and the piquant look of the characteristic steps, which for originality and precision I have never seen surpassed, except in Hungary.

And then there is Strauss, conducting his fine orchestra; and when the new waltzes he writes expressly for each fashionable ball turn out successful, the dancers stop to applaud him, the ladies approach the platform and throw him bouquets, and he is recalled at the end of the waltz. Thus there is no jealousy between dancing and music; each shares with the other in its pleasure and success. This is only fair, for Strauss is an artist. The influence he has already exercised over musical feeling throughout Europe in introducing cross rhythms into waltzes, is not sufficiently appreciated. So piquant is the effect that the dancers themselves have already sought to imitate it by creating the *deux-temps* waltz, although the music itself has kept the triple rhythm. If, out of Germany, the public at large can be induced to understand the singular charm frequently resulting from contrary rhythms, it will be entirely owing to Strauss. Beethoven's marvels in this style are too far above them, and act only upon exceptional audiences; Strauss has addressed himself to the masses, and his numerous imitators have been forced, whilst imitating, to second him.

The simultaneous employment of the various divisions of the bar and syncopated accentuations of the air, even in a regular and invariable form, is to simple rhythm what the harmonies of parts in motion are to plain chords; I might even say, what harmony itself is to the unison and the octave. But this is not the place in which to examine the question. Some twelve years ago I ventured to moot it in a study on rhythm, which

cost me the anathemas of many persons, most of whom had certainly no idea of my meaning. You know, my friend, that, without being quite so behindhand as Italy, France is still the centre of resistance to any progress in the emancipation of rhythm. A minute section of the Parisian public is beginning to suspect, thanks to having heard Weber and Beethoven at the Conservatoire, that the constant use of only one rhythm is monotonous, and occasionally commonplace. But I have no longer the slightest wish to torment those who are behindhand on this subject. Our French peasants sing only in unison. I am quite convinced that if the furious partisans of simple rhythm—phrases of eight bars, with a bang from the big-drum on the strong beat of each bar—ever come to feel the harmonies of rhythm, it will not be until the same peasants are able to sing in six parts; and this is equivalent to saying they will never do so. Let us therefore leave them to their primitive enjoyments.

At one of the nocturnal festivals, I was once in a mournful reverie—for Strauss's waltzes, with their fervid airs resembling love voices, have the gift of putting me into a profound melancholy—when a small man, with a clever, intelligent face, made his way to me through the crowd. It was the day after one of my concerts.

"Sir," he said briskly, "you are French, and I am Irish; so there is no national *amour-propre* in my opinion, and" (seizing my left hand) "I beg your permission to grasp the hand that wrote the symphony of *Romeo*. You understand Shakespeare!"

"Certainly," I answered, "but you are mistaken in the hand, as I always write with this one."

The Irishman smiled, took the right hand I offered him, pressed it very cordially, and went off, saying:

"Oh, these Frenchmen! these Frenchmen! They must laugh at everything and everybody; even at their own admirers."

I never knew the name of this kindly islander, who thus took my symphonies for left-handed children.

But I have told you nothing of Ernst, who made such a sensation in Vienna about this time. I shall reserve all mention of him for my Russian travels; for I met him again at St. Petersburg, where his success is daily increasing. He is now reposing on the shores of the Baltic, and taking lessons from the grandiose and sublime sounds of the sea. I hope to meet him again in some other part of the world; for Liszt, Ernst, and myself are, I think, among musicians the three greatest wanderers ever impelled by curiosity and restless temper to leave their own country.

It requires a talent as prodigious as that of Ernst even so much as to attract attention in a town like Vienna, where such superior violinists have performed and still perform. Among the latter I may mention Mayseder, whose great and well-merited fame has long been established; the young Joachim,[1] whose name is beginning to appear; and Hellmesberger junior, son of the concert-meister of the Kärntnerthor. Mayseder is a brilliant violinist, correct, graceful, irreproachable, always sure of himself; the two others, Joachim especially, are, as befits their age, rash and impetuous, ambitious of producing novel effects, indefatigably energetic, and refusing to believe in the impossible. Mayseder is the leader of Prince Czartoryski's excellent quartet; his second violin is Strebinger, his tenor Durst, and his cello Borzaga. All of them

[1] Joachim is now the first violinist in Germany, indeed one might say in Europe, and is a finished artist.

belong to the imperial band. This quartet is among the fine things to be heard at Vienna; and its interpretations of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart are well worthy of the religious attention with which they are listened to once a week by the Prince and a select audience. The Princess Czartoryski, a perfect musician and distinguished pianist, sometimes takes an active part in these concerts.

After one of Hummel's quintets, which she had just been playing in a masterly manner, someone said to me:

"Decidedly there are no more amateurs."

"Oh," I answered, "if you look well, you may perhaps find them, even among artists. But, in any case, the Princess is an exception."

The imperial band, composed of picked instrumentalists and singers, is of course first-rate. There are some children in the choir with lovely voices. The orchestra is not large, but it is exquisite. Most of the solos are entrusted to Staudigl. The band recalled to my mind that of the Tuileries in 1828 and 1829, when it was at its prime. I heard it perform a mass composed of fragments from various masters, such as Assmayer, Joseph Haydn, and his brother Michael. They sometimes did these *pot-pourris* in Paris, for the service at the Chapel Royal, but not often; probably this was also the case at Vienna, but I consider myself ill-used, in spite of the remarkable beauty of the pieces I heard.

If I am not mistaken, the Emperor had three kapellmeisters at that time: Eybler and Assmayer, learned masters of counterpoint, and Weigl, who died a few days before I left Vienna. Weigl is known to us in France by his opera of *The Swiss Family*, performed in Paris in

1828. It was not very successful; musicians thought it insipid and colourless, and the wits described it as a pastoral written in milk.

One thing at Vienna struck me painfully, and that was the incredible ignorance prevailing with respect to Gluck's works. From how many musicians and amateurs have I not inquired if they knew *Alceste*, or *Armide*, or *Iphigénie*, and the reply was always the same: "They are never performed at Vienna; we do not know them." But, you wretched creatures, whether they are performed or not, you ought to know them by heart! It is very plain that contractors like Messrs. Balochino and Pockorny, who are more solicitous of large receipts than of fine works, will never imitate the King of Prussia, and indulge in the luxury of producing antique *chefs d'œuvre*, when they can offer such modern works to the public as *Indra* or *Alessandro Stradella*.

They even spoke of the late discovery of Gluck's tomb as one of the remarkable events of the season! The discovery! Can you imagine such a thing? It was unknown, then? Exactly so. Oh, my dear Viennese! you are quite fit to inhabit Paris! Still, there is nothing strange in the fact, if one remembers that to this day no one knows the spot where Mozart's ashes are reposing.

I said something in my first letter which can hardly have given you a very brilliant idea of the Conservatoire at Vienna. Notwithstanding all the merit of its director, M. Preyer, and the much-appreciated talent of Tischoff, Boehm, and certain other excellent professors, the Conservatoire is not what would be naturally expected from a capital like Vienna, either in importance or numbers. A few years ago, indeed, it seems to have been in such

decay that, but for the energy and devotion of Dr. J. Bacher, it would not now be in existence. Dr. Bacher is not an artist; he is one of those lovers of music, of whom there are some two or three in Europe, who undertake and carry out the hardest tasks, for pure love of art, acquire a real authority over opinion by the purity of their taste, and succeed in doing in their own strength what monarchs fail to undertake. Active, persevering, willing, and generous beyond all expression, Dr. Bacher is the most staunch supporter of music at Vienna and a godsend to musicians.

The Philharmonic concerts take place in the Conservatoire concert-room, which though small is very good. They are under the able direction of the Baron de Lannoye, as are the Academy *réunions* of male singers, a most valuable institution, directed by M. Barthe with zeal and intelligence. There I heard the astounding pianist, Dreyschock, five or six times, and always with renewed pleasure; a young man, whose talent is fresh, brilliant, and energetic, with immense technical skill and musical feeling of the highest order. He has introduced many novel and effective combinations into his pianoforte playing.

I must ask the forgiveness of many remarkable artists for the brevity with which I am forced to speak of them. I should have to write a book to do justice to each, and catalogue all the musical wealth of Vienna in detail.

And as yet I have said nothing of certain of its most eminent minds; more especially of those who compose chamber music, such as quartets and songs with piano accompaniments. M. Becher is among this number; a dreamy, concentrated soul, whose harmonical audacity goes beyond anything ever yet attempted, who endeavours

to enlarge the form of the quartet and give it new turns. M. Becher is also a distinguished writer, and his criticisms are highly esteemed among the masters of the Viennese press.[1]

Councillor Wesque, of Putlingen, who publishes under the pseudonym of Hoven, gave me many a happy hour with his songs, the style of which is charming, full of fancy, and accompanied by very piquant harmonies. I noticed the same characteristics in some movements from two of his operas, which unfortunately I only heard on the piano.

M. Dessauer is better known to us from his two years' stay in Paris—I think from 1840 to 1842. He has set to music many pieces by our best poets. He continues to add to his songs, and most of them obtain decided success in the drawing-room. Dessauer's style is exclusively the elegiac; he is only at his ease when dealing with the miseries of the soul; sufferings are his dearest delight, and tears his greatest joy. Both at Vienna and Paris, he was always waging a courteous war with me. His one idea is to convert me to a musical doctrine with which I am not yet acquainted, for he never could make up his mind to impart it to me. Every time we had an opportunity for discussing the matter *thoroughly*—to quote his own word—if I looked at him steadily in my gravest manner, he concluded that I was laughing at him, shut his lips, and postponed the conversation. If all preachers had acted thus, we should still be groping in the darkness of paganism.

I must not forget to mention the cordiality with which I was received at Vienna by many writers who, like

[1] Unfortunate Becher! I hear that he madly threw himself into the furnace of the last insurrection at Vienna, and was taken, tried, condemned, and shot.

myself, are labouring in the rugged and flinty soil of criticism, too often to see it produce nothing but thistles and nettles. They treated me as an equal, for which I thank them. One of them, M. Saphir, gives an annual literary and musical gathering, in which, in spite of the censure, his sparkling wit contrives to use its scourge, to the great delight of his hearers, who, like the rest of the world, are always enchanted at hearing someone cut up.

I say nothing of the conductor's baton[1] with which I was so kindly presented by my friends at Vienna, at a supper-party, after my third concert; nor of the handsome present made me by the Emperor; nor of many other things which you will have heard through the newspapers of the day. You are not ignorant of any good fortune that befel me during that journey, and so it would be useless to recur to it.

H. B.

[1] This baton is silver-gilt, inscribed with the names of the numerous subscribers. It is wreathed with a spray of laurel, on the leaves of which are inscribed the titles of my works. The Emperor, after having attended one of my concerts in the Salle des Redoutes, sent me a hundred ducats (eleven hundred francs). But he accompanied it with this extraordinary compliment: "Tell Berlioz that I was *very much amused!*"

CHAPTER LXVI.

Pesth.

Letter III.—To Monsieur Humbert Ferrand.

When travelling in Austria, one must positively visit at least three of its capitals—Vienna, Pesth, and Prague. Certain wayward minds assert that Pesth is in Hungary, and Prague in Bohemia; but none the less do these two states form integral parts of the Austrian Empire, to which they are attached and devoted—soul, body, and estate—much as Ireland is to England, Poland to Russia, Algeria to France; much as all conquered nations have always been to their conquerors. Let us start accordingly for Pesth, a great Austrian town in Hungary.

I am not fortunate in my relations with the Danube. As I told you, its last steamboat had been taken off when I wanted to embark at Ratisbon for Vienna; it was covered with fogs, and so prevented me from going down as far as Pesth; and you will soon see that the old river did not stop its ill-natured proceedings there. Apparently it objected to my entering its dominions, and wished not merely to throw difficulties in my way, but even to hinder me altogether. And yet how I admired it! How often have I eulogised that majestic and powerful river. It

ought to have been grateful for my admiration. But far from this, the more I went into ecstasies over its grandeur, the more hostile did it show itself, and I might say of it what La Fontaine said of his lion :

> Ce monseigneur du lion là
> Fut parent de Caligula.

Before leaving Vienna, I expressed a wish to be introduced to Prince Metternich, but even those friends who were in a position to enable them to procure me this honour seemed so much put out by my request that I was on the point of withdrawing it. It was a question of seeing an official acquainted with a Privy-councillor who would speak to some member of the cabinet influential enough to introduce me to a secretary of the embassy, who would get the ambassador to speak to a minister, so that he might introduce me. I found this circumlocution infinitely too prolonged, and at last the idea occurred to me of dispensing with the officer, the councillor, the chancellor, the secretary, the ambassador, and the minister, and introducing myself. My friends, seeing that I was resolved on trying the experiment, very probably regarded me as a madman *in petto*, or, at any rate, as a Frenchman and a half. Be that as it may, however, I braved Austrian etiquette, or the opinion entertained at Vienna about its strictness, and took my way to the Prince's palace. I go up, find an officer on guard in the drawing-room, and, presenting my card, make known my wishes. He goes to the Prince, and returns in a moment to inform me that his highness will be disengaged in a few minutes, and be much pleased to receive me. Accordingly, I was admitted without further preamble. The Prince was most amiable, questioned

me much about music, especially my own, of which, as it seemed to me, his highness had formed beforehand a most curious notion, which I endeavoured to correct. Finally, I withdrew, enchanted with my welcome, immensely surprised at the facility with which I had thus broken the laws of German etiquette, and quite proud of having for some minutes exercised the functions of officer, councillor, chancellor, ambassador's secretary, and minister, without any trouble whatever. And thus I again recognised the truth of the evangelical precept, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," and also the exquisite tact with which on occasion certain princes can say, "*Sinite parvulos venire ad me*," on condition, of course, that the *parvuli* should be foreigners, no matter how unskilful, and that they belong to that class of useless folk, always interesting to see close at hand, called in these days poets, musicians, painters—in a word, artists, and in the Middle Ages more rudely styled minstrels, troubadours, stage-players, and gipsies.

Perhaps you will be surprised to hear, my dear Humbert, that I did not exercise my powerful influence to obtain admission to the Imperial Family, in order to pay my respects to them—and you will have some grounds for astonishment. There was, in fact, a reason of state for my coyness, which I will tell you in the strictest confidence. It had come to my ears, in the first days of my stay at Vienna, that the Empress, that angel of piety, sweetness, and devotion, held even stranger opinions about me than Prince Metternich did about my music. Certain passages out of my *Voyage en Italie*, somewhat too uncivilised in style, and which, moreover, had been skilfully commented on to Her Majesty by kind friends (one is a prey to friends everywhere, even at the

Austrian Court), had gained me the reputation of a regular brigand in these high places, neither more nor less. Well, I was not merely flattered—that would be saying too little—but really proud of this eccentric renown which thus fell upon me from the heavens. I said to myself, what you would certainly have said in my place, that a slight aureole of crime is too distinguished a thing, since Byron has made it fashionable, not to be carefully preserved when one has had the good fortune to gain it, even if it be placed upon a forehead altogether unworthy of it. Accordingly I reasoned thus: "If I *present myself* at Court, the Empress may not impossibly condescend to address a few words to me. I shall necessarily have to answer her to the best of my ability, and, once engaged in conversation, heaven knows where I may be led. Her Majesty may lose her original opinion of my individuality, and only see in me, as in many others, a worshipper of her own grace and goodness. She will find nothing fierce or sinister in my countenance; nothing tigerish in my voice. True, my nose will always be slightly aquiline; but, on the whole, *my appearance will not betray my employment*, and I shall pass for a plain, honest man, incapable of *doing any harm*, or of even stopping a coach, and thus my reputation would be lost. No, by Jove! I would rather remain a brigand, and vanish as quickly as possible, since distance would only serve to increase and embellish my aureole."

That is why I obstinately declined to do myself the honour of being presented at the Austrian Court, and went off suddenly one fine morning into Hungary. I must here give you an account of my quarrels with the Danube. Each day it enveloped itself in a cloud, like Homer's gods when about to commit some evil action;

hence the interruption to navigation and the necessity laid upon travellers of taking the land way to Pesth. This is a very polite way of putting it. You must know, my friend, that the most ordinary pebbles are as scarce as emeralds on the surface of the immense plain that extends from Vienna to Pesth; the soil is composed of a fine dust, as fine as if it had been sifted, and which, when soaked by rain, forms quagmires that you can only cross by the aid of a grand supply of horses, and in which you are momently engulfed at the risk of never being able to get out again. I ought therefore rather to have said the mud way than the land way. Imagine the charms of such a journey! But still all this was nothing. What should the Danube do but overflow its banks, and overwhelm with its angry waters the black ditch in which we had been paddling for the last fifteen hours, and which in that country they persist in calling *the grand road!* At midnight I was roused from my slumbers by the carriage coming to a stand-still, and by the sound of crashing, rolling water. The coachman, evidently in search of adventures, had driven us into the bed of the river, and dared not move a step forward.

All this time the water was rising. A Hungarian officer in the *coupé* had spoken to me two or three times through a small window in the intermediate compartment of the unhappy carriage.

"Captain," said I in my turn.

"Sir."

"Don't you think we shall be drowned?"

"Yes, sir, I do! May I offer you a cigar?"

His insolent *sang-froid* made me feel much inclined to strike him, and in a fury of rage I accepted his cigar and began promptly to smoke it.

The water continued to rise.

Then the coachman, making a desperate effort, turned sharply round at the risk of upsetting us into the stream, succeeded in climbing up the bank, to which we were fortunately pretty near, drove across country and brought us . . . straight into a lake. This time I thought it was all up with us, and again calling to the officer, I said:

"Captain, have you got a cigar left?"

"Yes."

"Well, give it me quick, for this time we shall really be drowned!"

Fortunately, a worthy peasant was passing (where the deuce was he going at such an hour, on such a road?), helped us out of the lake, and gave our unlucky Phaëton some directions, thanks to which we succeeded in finding the road. We arrived at Pesth next day, having gone from ditches to quagmires, amid jolts and starts, alternately driving into the water out of the mud, and into the mud out of the water. I should say we arrived opposite Pesth, on the right bank of the Danube, which was kind enough to allow of our crossing it in a boat for lack of a bridge.

On this same right bank a tolerably large town is situated, and I asked my captain its name.

"That is Buda," said he.

"Buda? But on my map the town opposite to Pesth bears quite a different name. It is called Ofen."

"Precisely, that is Buda. Ofen is a very free German translation of the Hungarian word."

"I understand." The German maps are apparently drawn up with no less ingenuity than the French ones. Only on the latter they should put "*Ratisbonne*, pronounced *Regensburg*," and on the former "*Ofen*, pronounced *Buda*."

On my arrival I had a treat which I had promised myself the night before, if I should escape from the mud and the Danube. I took a bath, drank two glasses of tokay, and slept for twenty hours, though not without dreaming of inundations and lakes of mud. After which I had to make preparations for my first concert, arrange with the managers, look for violinists, see the kapell-meister, singers, etc., etc.

Thanks to the kindly influence of Count Radaï, the intendant of the National Theatre, where I had been advised to give my concerts in preference to the German Theatre, the principal difficulties were soon overcome. I had a momentary uneasiness about the arrangement of my orchestra, for that of the National Theatre is so small that it was impossible to think of getting up my symphonies with its little band of violins only. On the other hand, it was impossible to have recourse to the artists at the German Theatre, owing to a regulation which will give you some idea of the touching affection of the Hungarians for everything German. The admission of any artist from the German Theatre into the National Theatre, whether singer, chorister, or instrumentalist, is strictly forbidden, no matter how greatly his assistance may be needed. More than this, at the Hungarian Theatre the use of all languages ancient and modern in singing is permitted, with the single exception of German, which is formally prohibited. This strange and daring exception in a country subject to Austria is somewhat of an imitation of Napoleon's Continental system, practised towards Germany in general and Austria in particular by the Hungarian nation. Accordingly, the products of German industry are commonly rejected, and it is considered a duty in all classes of the population to make use of Hungarian

manufactures only. Hence the frequent use in large letters on the windows of most of the Pesth shops, even those of the modistes, of the word *hony*, which puzzled me so much the first day, and which means *national*.

Henry Müller, the music publisher at Vienna (the most obliging of men, who overwhelmed me with marks of attention during my stay in Austria), had fortunately given me a letter to a colleague at Pesth, one M. Treichlinger, one of the great violinists produced by the ancient German school. He put me into communication with the principal members of the Philharmonic Society of Pesth, and very speedily obtained for me a dozen excellent violinists, whom he begged to be allowed to lead himself. They acquitted themselves marvellously of the task which they had so courteously undertaken, and the performance of my programme was, I fancy, one of the best that had been heard at Pesth for a long time. Among the pieces was the march which now forms the *finale* to the first part of my legend of *Faust*. I wrote it the night before my departure for Hungary. A Viennese amateur, well up in the ways of the country which I was about to visit, had brought me a volume of old airs. "If you wish to please the Hungarians," said he, "write a piece on one of their national themes; they will be delighted with it, and when you come back you shall give me an account of their *eljen* (hurrahs) and applause. Here is a collection in which you have only to choose." I took his advice and chose the theme of Rákóczy, on which I wrote the grand march you know.

No sooner had the announcement of this new piece of *hony* music spread through Pesth, than the national imagination began to ferment. They wondered how I should treat that famous—one might say almost sacred—

theme, which had long set all Hungarian hearts beating with enthusiasm for liberty and glory.

There was even some anxiety on the subject, they dreaded a profanation. . . . Certainly, I was so far from being offended at this misgiving that I even admired it. Besides, it was only too well justified by a host of pitiable *pot-pourris* and arrangements in which melodies worthy of the highest respect had been horribly outraged. Perhaps, also, more than one Hungarian amateur had witnessed in Paris the impious barbarity with which we drag our immortal *Marseillaise* through the musical gutter on national fête-days.

At last, a M. Horwath, chief editor of a Hungarian paper, being unable to restrain his curiosity any longer, came to the publisher with whom I was in treaty about the organisation of the concert, found out the address of the copyist who had been commissioned to write the orchestral parts from the score, ran off to this man, asked for my MSS., and carefully examined them. M. Horwath was but ill pleased with the result of his inquiry, and could not disguise his anxiety.

"I have seen your score of the *Marche de Rákóczy*," said he.

"Well?"

"Well, I have my fears."

"Bah!"

"You have marked the theme *piano*, and we, on the contrary, are accustomed to hear it played *fortissimo*."

"Yes, by the Zingari. Besides, is that all? Never fear; you shall have a *forte* such as you have never heard in all your life. You have not read it properly. The *end* must be considered in everything."

Still, on the day of the concert I felt a certain

tightening in my throat when the moment came for producing the piece. After a trumpet phrase based on the rhythm of the first bars of the melody, the theme appears, you will remember, performed *piano* by the flutes and clarinets, and accompanied *pizzicato* by the stringed instruments. To this unexpected treatment the public listened in silence; but when, after a long *crescendo*, fugued fragments of the theme reappeared, interrupted by dull beats of the big drum, with all the effect of distant cannon, the room began to seethe with an indescribable sound, and when at length the orchestra burst out in a furious *mêlée*, and hurled forth the long delayed *fortissimo*, it was shaken by the most unheard-of cries and stampings; the concentrated fury of all this burning audience exploded in accents that shivered me with terror. I felt as if my hair were standing on end, and from the moment of that fatal bar had to bid farewell to the peroration of my piece, the orchestral tempest being quite incapable of contending with the eruption of this irresistible volcano. We had to recommence, as you may imagine; and the second time it was with the greatest difficulty that the public could contain itself two or three moments longer than before in order to hear a few bars of the *coda*. M. Horwath was throwing himself about his box like one possessed; I could not help laughing, as I threw a glance at him which said: "Well, are you still afraid? Are you satisfied with your *forte?*" It was a lucky thing for me that I had placed the *Rákóczy-induló* (that is the Hungarian title of the piece) at the end of the concert, for anything played afterwards would have been entirely lost.

I was violently agitated, as may be believed, after such

a hurricane, and was wiping my face in a little room behind the stage, when I experienced a singular rebound from the emotion of the concert-room. It happened in this wise. A poorly dressed man, with a strangely agitated face, dropped in upon me unawares in my small retreat. The moment he caught sight of me he flung himself upon me and embraced me with fervour; his eyes were full of tears, and with difficulty he stammered out these words:

"Ah, sir, sir! I Hungarian—poor fellow—not speak French—un poco l'Italiano. Forgive—my—ecstasy. Ah, I understood your cannon. Yes, yes—the great battle—German dogs!" And striking himself a great blow on the chest with his fist, "In my heart here—I shall bear you—ah, you Frenchman—you revolutionist—you *do* know how to make revolutionary music."

I cannot attempt to describe the terrible excitement of this man, his tears and gnashings of teeth. It was something almost appalling; it was sublime.

You may well believe, my dear Humbert, that after that the *Rákóczy-induló* was put into all the programmes, and always with the same result. Indeed, on leaving I was obliged to bequeath my manuscript to the town of Pesth, by its own desire, and a month later received a copy of it at Breslau. To this day it is performed in Hungary on all great occasions. But I must take this opportunity of informing M. Erckl, the kapell-meister, that I have made various alterations in it since then by putting about thirty bars more into the *coda*, which, I think, add to its effect.

I shall make a point of sending him the revised score, corrected and augmented, as soon as my publisher will allow.[1]

[1] (March 6th, 1861.) I have just sent the score to Hungary. A few weeks ago a body of young Hungarians sent me a silver crown

M. Erckl is a most excellent man of great talent. I heard an opera of his during my stay at Pesth, cleverly conducted by himself, and entitled *Hunyady*, the subject of which is taken from the heroic annals of Hungary. It contains many things remarkable for their originality, and more especially for the depth of feeling which dictated them. Moreover, it is clearly written, and instrumented in a very refined and intelligent manner, by which I am far from meaning that the instrumentation is lacking in energy. Madame Schodel, a genuine lyrical tragedian of the school of Madame Branchu—an extinct school of which I little expected to find an offshoot in Hungary—played and sang the principal part beautifully.

I must also mention a very meritorious tenor named Feredy in the Hungarian *troupe*. He sings the Hungarian

of most exquisite workmanship, bearing these words on the coat-of-arms of the town of Gior (Raab in German): "The Young Men of Gior to Hector Berlioz." This present was accompanied by a letter, to which I replied thus:

"GENTLEMEN,—I have received your handsome present, together with the flattering letter accompanying it. This proof of sympathy, from a country of which I have always preserved such tender memories, touched me deeply.

"The effect of my work is doubtless due to the feelings which your national air awakens in you, whom, according to your own poetical expression, it must lead *to life*—in you of whom one may say with Virgil,

'Furor iraque mentes
Præcipitant, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis.'

"But if in my music you have found even one spark of the enthusiasm which kindles in all noble Hungarian breasts, I must consider myself only too fortunate, and regard this success as one of the rarest that any artist can obtain.

"Receive, gentlemen, my most cordial greetings, together with this expression of my gratitude.—Yours faithfully,

"HECTOR BERLIOZ.

"February 14th, 1861."

romances and national songs marvellously, with a charming and original accentuation that would certainly make them attractive to all nations. The concert-meister is a violinist of great talent, named Kohne. who resided for a long time in Paris, and, if I am not mistaken, attended the Conservatoire.

The chorus of the National Theatre of Pesth is but feeble, both as regards the numbers and the quality of the voices. The Hungarian language is by no means unfavourable to music, indeed in my opinion it is much less hard than German. A wonderful language! which no one can understand . . . unless they learn it. It would be useless to try to discover any resemblance between Hungarian and any other known tongue; there is none. Even certain musical terms derived from the Italian, which have been preserved almost intact everywhere else, are replaced by peculiar terms in Hungarian, either composite or simple, but entirely different. For example, take the word *concert*, which is to be found almost exactly the same whether in Italian, Spanish, French, German, English, or Russian. You would never guess that on the Hungarian placards it becomes *hangverseny*, neither more nor less. This strange word means literally *concurrence of sounds*.

My musical preoccupations did not prevent me from attending two balls during my stay at Pesth, as well as a grand political banquet given by the Hungarian nobility. Never have I seen anything so magnificently original as these balls, as much from their prodigious display of luxury as from the singular picturesqueness of the national costumes, and the beauty of the proud race of Magyars. The dances are essentially different in character from those known throughout the rest of Europe. Our

cold French country dances play no great part in them. Mazurkas, tarsalgos, keringos, and csardàs' reign triumphant. The csardàs especially, a rustic importation, danced with a charming exuberance of delight and spirits, seemed in particular favour with the aristocratic dancers, notwithstanding the timid remarks of an unlucky newspaper critic, who took it into his head to criticise the figures and movements of the csardàs as improper, and compared them, most inaccurately, to the eccentricities of the unmentionable dance interdicted by the Parisian sergents-de-ville. Heaven only knows with what a volley of reproaches he was greeted, and what withering glances he received from the ladies, when he dared to appear at the ball after the publication of his article. The *hony* writer was *honni*.[1] That pun I hatched just forty-eight hours ago! The political banquet gave me the opportunity of hearing the celebrated orator Deak, the O'Connell of Hungary, whose name is in every mouth, and his portrait in every house. Like the illustrious defender of Ireland, M. Deak only desires to bring about the reforms necessary for his country gradually and legitimately, and has much difficulty in restraining the quivering impatience of his party. He spoke but little, and very calmly, and I understood the subject of his speech from the exclamation which escaped my neighbour, like an aside, "Fabius *cunctator!*"

Among the guests, a young man with a very expressive face was pointed out to me. "He is an Atlas," said M. Horwath. "How an Atlas?" "Yes, he is a poet, and bears the name of Hugo."

During dinner, a small orchestra of dark Zingari performed some national airs after a fashion of its own—

[1] *Accursed*, or *disgraced*.

that is to say, an extremely *naïve* and wild one—and these alternating with the speeches and toasts, and amply seconded by the burning wines of Hungary, excited the revolutionary fever of the guests to excess.

Next morning, I had to bid farewell to my Hungarian hosts. I departed, still quivering with various emotions, and full of sympathy with so ardent, chivalrous, and generous a nation. During my stay at Pesth the Danube had calmed down, all expression of ill-temper had disappeared from its venerable face, and it now allowed me to follow its course as far as Vienna without let or hindrance. No sooner had I arrived than I received a visit from the amateur whose officious advice had persuaded me to write the *Rákóczy* march. He was a prey to the most comical uneasiness.

"The fame of your piece has spread even here," he said, "and I hasten to implore you not to say a word about me in the matter. If it were known in Vienna that I had contributed in any way whatever to its composition I should be gravely compromised, and I might come to grief about it."

I promised to keep his secret. If I tell you his name now, it is only because I think there has been time since then for so serious a matter to be hushed up. It was . . . ah, well, it would certainly be indiscreet if I told you. I only wanted to frighten him.

H. B.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Prague.

Letter IV.—To Monsieur Humbert Ferrand.

I had already gone all over Germany before it came into my head to visit Bohemia. When at last I thought of it at Vienna, I ought in prudence to have rejected the idea at once, according to the advice of several apparently well-informed persons. "Don't go to Prague," said they; "it is a city of pedants, where the works of the dead alone are respected. The Bohemians are excellent musicians, it is true, but only after the manner of professors and schoolmasters; all novelty is detestable in their eyes, and the chances are that you won't care for them."

I had accordingly made up my mind to give up the journey, when someone brought me a Prague *Gazette Musicale*, containing three long articles on my overture to *King Lear*. I had them translated, and, far from finding that they savoured of malevolence and pedantry, I recognised with delight exactly the opposite characteristics. The author, one Dr. Ambros,[1] seemed to combine

[1] [Ambros's musical history fully bears out Berlioz's eulogy. His death unfortunately put an end to it at the close of the sixteenth century, but up to that point it is far superior to any other single

real learning with judgment and imagination. I wrote to thank him, and to sound him as to his countrymen's disposition of mind with regard to myself.

His answer quite dispelled my doubts, and my desire to visit Prague became as great as the fear I formerly had of showing myself there. When the Viennese heard that I had made up my mind to go, they did not spare their witticisms at my expense. "The inhabitants of Prague claim to have discovered Mozart; they swear by him, care for no symphonies but his. They will give it you finely," etc. But Dr. Ambros had inspired me with a confidence which nothing could shake, and I set off, notwithstanding the gloomy forebodings of the mockers.

Is it not pleasant, five hundred leagues away from your home, to find an unknown friend waiting for you when you alight in a foreign town, who recognises you by your *charmingly characteristic countenance*, as the man he is looking for, accosts you, shakes you by the hand, and tells you in your own language that everything has been prepared for your reception? This is exactly what happened to me with Dr. Ambros when I arrived at Prague. The only thing was that, as my *charmingly characteristic face* completely failed in its effect, he did not recognise me. It was I, on the contrary, who, on catching sight of a small man with a quick, kindly countenance, and hearing him say in French to someone, "How on earth do you expect me to make out M. Berlioz in this crowd? I have never seen him" —it was I, I repeat, who had the amazing acuteness

work, and contains a great deal of fresh investigation and of sound judgment. The Early English musicians even receive something like adequate notice.]

to guess that he was M. Ambros, and going up abruptly to the two friends:

"Here I am," I said.

"M. Berlioz?"

"Neither more nor less."

"Well, good-day to you; we are very glad to see you at last. Come along; we have got a room all ready for you, and an orchestra too; both very warm. You will be well pleased with them. Rest yourself to-night, and to-morrow we will set to work."

Accordingly, we began our preparations for my first concert the very next day, after first making acquaintance with the musical authorities of the town. M. Ambros introduced me to the director of the Conservatoire, M. Kittl, who in his turn made me known to the brothers Scraub, kapell-meisters of the theatre and the cathedral respectively, and also to the concert-meister, M. Mildner. Then came the turn of the singers, journalists, and principal amateurs; and when all these visits were over I said to M. Ambros, "Now, supposing you were to introduce me to the town. I perceive a hill literally covered with monumental buildings, and, contrary to my usual habit, I have the greatest curiosity to examine it all thoroughly."

"Well, come along," said the obliging doctor.

Perhaps it was the only time that I did not mind the trouble of such an ascent (of course I except that of Vesuvius; and as for Etna, I never saw it). Joking apart, the climb is a hard one; but how wonderful it is, that continuous succession of temples, palaces, battlements, steeples, towers, colonnades, courts, and arches! What a view when you get to the top of the mountain, so adorned with marble! On the one

hand, a forest extending to the great plain below; on the other, a cascade of houses descending like a smoky torrent to the Moldau, which sweeps majestically past the town to the sound of the mills and factories which are worked by it, leaps a barrier that Bohemian ingenuity has erected to modify the course of its waters, and then, passing by two small islands, loses itself in the far distance, amidst the windings of a chain of red hills which lead it carefully towards the horizon.

"That is the Huntsman's Island," said my guide, "so named, doubtless, because there is no game there. Behind it, as you go up the river, you may see Sophie's Island, in the centre of which is the Sophie concert-room where you are to give your concert, and which is devoted to the meetings of the Singing Academy, Sophie's Academy."

"And who may this Sophie be, in whose room and academy and island I am to have the honour of giving my concert? Is she a nymph of the Moldau, the heroine of some romance of which this island was the scene, or is she merely a rough red-handed washerwoman who, like a modern Calypso, makes it resound to her songs and to the thumping of her washing-bat?"

"Your last supposition is, I fancy, the most correct. Tradition does not say, however, that her hands were red."

"Ah, doctor, you seem to me to have been playing the part of Ulysses with this Sophie! Is there a Eucharis there? Let us see. Suppose I turn Telemachus and look for you in the island of Calypso." A blush was the doctor's only answer, and I saw that it would not do to harp too long on that string. . . . And so it befell that I heard nothing definite about this Sophie, who was the

patroness of a Singing Academy, a concert-room, and an island.

Unhappily, that delicious retreat in the midst of the Moldau's flowing waters, which in summer is shaded by a verdant girdle and garlanded with flowers, conceals, somewhere in the vicinity of its Temple to Harmony, two or three abominable *guinguettes*, where bad musicians make execrable music in the open air, and ill-conditioned young people abandon themselves to rollicking dances, bad tobacco, worse beer, and still worse gossip.

To return abruptly to the subject of music, though reserving to myself the right of wandering again at will, I hope, my dear friend, that you do not expect me to write you a dissertation more wearisome than learned, more pretentious than tiresome, and more *futile* than *utile* (it is plain that I am a poet: I beg you to observe the facility with which rhymes drop from my pen), on the revolutions of music in Bohemia, on the special tendencies of the Slav mind, and on the probable date at which the old masters of this country allowed the use of the dominant seventh without preparation. On these deep and grave questions I must confess my incurable ignorance, and if my indolence were but less obstinate with regard to the study of history or of *histoires*, I should certainly prefer to make researches about the famous ivory guitar which the philosopher Koang-fu-Tsée, commonly called Confucius, used in preaching morality to the Chinese Empire. For I also play the guitar, and yet I never preached morality even to the population of a bed-room ten feet square; quite the contrary. True, my guitar is very simple, and the elephant's tusk does not enter into its ornamentation. No matter! The following passage, which I re-read yesterday for at least the hundredth time,

is a very good subject of meditation for philosophical musicians—not musical philosophers; there have been none since Leibnitz. I believe I have already quoted it elsewhere. "Koang-fu-Tsée, having accidentally heard the song called Li-po, which everyone says is fourteen thousand years old (after that let no one call music a modern art), was filled with such admiration that he remained seven days and nights without either sleeping, eating, or drinking. He then formulated his sublime doctrines, and promulgated them without difficulty, sung all the precepts to the air of Li-po, and thus preached morality to China with a five-stringed ivory guitar."

Alas for me! My guitar has not only five strings like that of Confucius, but sometimes even six; and yet I have not the smallest fame as a preacher. Ah! if it had only been ivory, what blessings might I not have scattered, what errors dissipated, what truths inculcated, what a beautiful religion I should have founded, and how happy we should all be!

Modern European music deprives no one of food or sleep, as the ancient Chinese melopœia did, and yet it has its value. That is to say, be it clearly understood, it does not prevent anyone from eating and drinking; though I have often heard it said by excellent musicians that whilst practising their art they had not even water to drink, and that such and such a celebrated composer or musician was dying of hunger. As for preventing sleep, the most ancient compositions of our old masters have certainly never had the slightest claim to that distinction. But now, the question is, what is my opinion about the musical institutions of Prague, and the taste and intelligence of its inhabitants. I should have to live

longer in that beautiful capital to know it thoroughly in this respect; however, I will try to gather up my recollections and only speak of what really struck me. I will tell you therefore of its Theatre and the singing *troupe*, the orchestra and the chorus;

Of its Conservatoire, the able composer who directs it, the masters and pupils I had the privilege of knowing;

The Singing Academy;

The *Maîtrise*, or cathedral school;

The military bands;

The virtuosi and composers independent of the aforesaid institutions;

And, finally, the public.

When I saw the theatre (in 1845) it struck me as dark, small, dirty, and very bad for sound. It has, I know, since been restored, and its new manager, M. Hoffman, makes the most laudable efforts to restore that prosperity which under his predecessors was fast vanishing. His *troupe* was superior to most German singing companies. The first tenor, the baritone (Strackaty), Mesdemoiselles Grosser, Kirchberger, and Madame Podhorsky, seemed to me artists of real merit, with rare voices both as to tune and *timbre*, and like all Bohemians, musicians besides . . . one could hardly say more. Unfortunately, the *personnel* of the orchestra and the chorus matched the scanty dimensions of the room, and seemed rather to reproach the manager with parsimony. With so small a number of performers, it really is not permissible to attempt any masterpieces in a high style, and yet this is just what the Prague Theatre occasionally does. Then there were deplorable mutilations, complained of by all artists. In these cases the splendour of the scenery and the quality of the performance

were in perfect harmony. In the *finale* of the fourth act of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, I remember seeing a ship *with a row of port-holes* setting sail for Greece. The *mise en scène* of the regular *répertoire* was somewhat better, and suffered little or nothing from the feebleness of the orchestra and chorus; it was composed, in fact, of contemptible little works translated from the French, and long since forgotten at the Opéra Comique. All managers are alike, their sagacity in the discovery of platitudes is equalled only by their instinctive aversion for any works tending either to refinement of style, grandeur, or originality. In this respect they are more *public* than the public, both in Germany, Italy, England, and elsewhere. I say nothing of France; it is well known that our lyrical theatres, without exception, are and have always been managed by superior men. And whenever the opportunity has presented itself of choosing between two productions, one commonplace and the other distinguished, between a creative artist and a miserable imitator, between bold ingenuity and insipid, prudent stupidity, their exquisite tact has never led them astray. Therefore, glory to them! All friends to art profess a veneration for these men only equal to their gratitude.

I have often wondered why theatrical managers everywhere have such a marked predilection for what genuine artists, cultivated minds, and even a certain section of the public itself persist in regarding as very poor manufacture, short-lived productions, the handiwork of which is as valueless as the raw material itself. Not as though platitudes always succeeded better than good works; indeed, the contrary is often the case. Neither is it that careful compositions entail more expense

than "shoddy." It is often just the other way. Perhaps it arises simply from the fact that the good works demand the care, study, attention, and, in certain cases, even the mind, talent, and inspiration of everyone in the theatre, from the manager down to the prompter. The others, on the contrary, being made especially for lazy, mediocre, superficial, ignorant, and silly people, naturally find a great many supporters. Well! a manager likes, above everything, whatever brings him in amiable speeches and satisfied looks from his underlings, he likes things that require no learning, and disturb no accepted ideas or habits, which gently go with the stream of prejudice, and wound no self-love, because they reveal no incapacity; in a word, things which do not take too long to get up.

Other managers, again, are ambitious of doing everything themselves, and for that reason alone are hostile to such as are ill-advised enough to offer them works which cannot be got up without the assistance of the authors. The importance acquired by these indiscreet authors is so much subtracted from that of the manager, who suffers under it and is indignant. The captain of the ship, thus humiliated before his crew, never forgives the pilot for having reduced him to inaction, and degraded him (without considering his feelings) to the rank of lieutenant or sub-lieutenant. Consequently, he hourly curses his own imprudence in venturing into quarters of which he did not know the difficulties, and vows never again to navigate waters that are not in every sense ploughed.

Besides this, some managers are monomaniacs. These are extravagantly fond of one particular channel of ideas, a particular class of incident, a particular epoch in history, particular costumes, scenes, and effects in the *mise en scène*, a particular singer, or dancer, or what not. They

must insist on introducing their hobby everywhere, in season and out of season. Thus the hobby of M. Duponchel, the director of the Opéra, was, is, and ever will be, a cardinal in a red hat under a daïs. Such operas as have no daïs, no cardinal, and no red hat (and there are many) have never had the very smallest attraction for him. And I once heard it said by M. Méry, that if the Almighty had a part in a new work, Duponchel would still insist on His being dressed out in his favourite head-gear. I say nothing of his love for horses; so profound a passion as that is too respectable.

All this, however, has no connection with the former manager of the Prague Theatre; indeed, I ought to have said so sooner. He was an honest man, and, like most of his trade, little versed in musical matters; but, unlike them, he was liked and esteemed by his dependents, and when, in consequence of the bad state of his affairs, he found himself compelled to give up the management of the theatre, he was sincerely regretted. M. Pockorny, the director of the An-der-Wien Theatre, at Vienna, must also be included among the honourable exceptions.

Enterprising managers who work on their own account and at their own risk are not numerous in Germany. I have only known five or six, namely, at Leipzig, Prague, Vienna, Pesth, and Hamburg. The other lyrical theatres are mostly under the direction of titled intendants, managing on behalf of their sovereigns. It must be admitted in general that no matter what the degree of aristocratic coldness with which many of these counts or barons treat their subordinates, artists much prefer them to the manufacturers who make capital out of them. The former have at any rate, for the most part, exquisitely polite manners, on which the latter do not particularly

pique themselves. Moreover, they possess the advantage of education, literary and occasionally musical, a still rarer article with contracting managers. Count von Rödern, who ruled the destinies of the Berlin Opera for a long time, is an example of this class.

At all events, though theatrical managers may be met with in Germany, whether contractors or intendants, who are extremely stupid and ignorant of everything appertaining to art, I do not think they can be compared to what France has produced in this line during the last thirty years. I would not mind betting that no German manager, either noble or plebeian, is ignorant of the names of Gluck or Mozart, or of their principal works. In France, on the contrary, one might cite a number of incredible blunders. For example, a certain director of the Opéra,[1] on receiving a visit from Cherubini, asked him, in an off-hand way, although the illustrious composer had stated his name, what *was his profession*, if he belonged to the *personnel* of the Opéra, and if he were attached to the service of the ballet or of the machinery. About the same period Cherubini, who had just had a new mass performed with great triumph, was calling one evening on the Superintendent of Fine Arts,[2] who paid him this extraordinary compliment: "Your mass is very fine, my dear Cherubini, its success is indisputable, but why do you confine yourself to sacred music? *You ought to have written an opera!*" Imagine the indignant embarrassment of the author of *Medée*, *Les Deux Journées*, *Lodoiska*, *Mont Saint-Bernard*, *Faniska*, *Les Abencerrages*, *Anacréon*, and many other dramatic works, at so unexpected a blow!

A director[3] of the Théâtre Français asked once who

[1] M. Duplautys.
[2] M. le Vicomte Sosthène de Larochefoucault. [3] M. Buloz.

wrote the comedy entitled *Le Médecin malgré lui*, and was much offended when told, with a burst of laughter, that it was by Molière. . . .

In Paris, moreover, there is one manager whose office is more difficult of access than that of a minister, who never replies when written to, and pushes his audacity so far as to request those persons whom he wants to be so kind as to call upon *him*, whoever they may be. The director has a favour to ask of them, and thinks it quite natural that they should put themselves out for him. It is true he does not always boast of the answers he receives in such cases. . . .

Still, it must be admitted that at the head of some of the theatres in Paris there are men who combine good sense, intellect, and literary merit (I do not say musical; that is never to be seen) with genuine politeness. Among the most intelligent of these, if not the most lucky and disinterested, may be mentioned Harel, who died about two years ago, after having won the prize offered by the Academy for the elegy on Voltaire. His *bon mots* enjoyed some celebrity. None of them, however, are to be compared with the one he suggested to Fréderick Lemaître on the following occasion. Harel was manager of the Theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin. One of our *grand-seigneurs*[1] among writers (in the old style), who was very rich, and much enamoured of art and poetry, had had a tragedy[2] performed at this theatre, the *mise en scène* of which cost him a considerable sum. He happened to be in Harel's office in company with Lemaître, having come to pay the bill for the scenery, costumes, accessories, etc., and thought himself at last free, when he was presented by the insatiable manager with an

[1] M. de Custine. [2] *Beatrix Cenci.*

account of three or four thousand francs for the ropes used in the machinery. In vain did M. de Custine rebel against what he had some grounds for calling robbery; he was compelled to pay, and went off in a fury of indignation. Lemaître, who had studied this curious scene in silence, tapped the manager on the shoulder, and said:

"Very careless of you, you left him his watch!"

H. B.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Prague.

LETTER V.—TO MONSIEUR HUMBERT FERRAND.

To-day I feel sufficiently serious to talk to you about the Conservatoire of Prague, and Conservatoires in general. However imperfect the state of these institutions may be, it seems to me that they alone in connection with musical art have been founded under the influence of good sense and reason. At the present moment every Conservatoire in Europe is directed by a musician, which has not always been the case. At this we can but marvel, and thank Providence. During the reign of that opinion now so universally prevalent, that *the more important an artistic question, and the more difficult of solution, the more necessary it is that the men appointed by Government to deal with it should be strangers to the art in question*—during the reign, I say, of these doctrines, which would obviously be dictated by madness if envy were not so plainly apparent in them, it is a subject for congratulation that the teaching of the different branches of music should be confided to special artists, more or less masters of their particular art. No doubt many people (particularly in Paris) would not fail to say that *this was a misfortune*, that it would be infinitely better to employ mathematicians to teach the

violin, to place men of letters at the head of composition classes, and choose medical men as singing-masters. Others (the Academy of the Fine Arts at the Institute is of this opinion) think that music in general is better known, better felt, better understood, and in consequence better judged of by painters, sculptors, architects, and engravers than by anyone else. And finally, many (indeed, the great majority) display quite a touching unanimity in laying down as a maxim, that not merely are musicians unnecessary for teaching music, or directing Conservatoires or operatic theatres, but that mathematicians, men of letters, doctors, engravers, painters, sculptors, and architects are a dangerous race, from their intelligence, and a certain odious sentiment proper to them all, the respect for art and science.

In the eyes of all upholders of this principle, the best judges and directors of musical art, and those most likely to exercise a beneficent influence upon its present and future state, are the men who are strangers to all science, all art, all feeling for the beautiful, all aspirations towards the ideal, all work, and all thought—men who have never done anything, who know nothing, believe in nothing, love nothing, wish for nothing, do nothing; and who combine with these indispensable conditions of ignorance, incompetence, and indifference, a certain indolence of mind akin to stupidity. It may be seen that the number of persons interested in supporting this beautiful thesis is so incalculable that one must not be astonished at the multitude of their proselytes. I am only surprised that their triumph should not be more complete, and their progress more rapid. Hence the appositeness of my remark on Conservatoires which are now given over exclusively to musicians.

More than this : the one at Prague, with which I have more particularly to do at present, is directed by a talented composer, full of love for his art, active, ardent, indefatigable, severe on occasion, but lavish of praise when praise is merited . . . and young. Such is M. Kittl. They might easily have found some heavy piece of mediocrity consecrated by years (for even in Bohemia there are men of this sort), and confided to him the task of gradually paralysing the progress of music in Prague. But no ! On the contrary, they got hold of M. Kittl, aged thirty-five, and so music is alive there, moves and grows. There must evidently have been some spirit of folly among the committee who made such a choice, or else that committee must have been composed exclusively of men with minds and hearts.

A musical Conservatoire ought, in my opinion, to be an establishment for maintaining the practice of musical art in all its departments, the learning and acquirements connected with it, the monumental works produced by it, and in addition to this, by placing itself at the head of the progressive movement inherent to an art so young as European music, it ought to preserve all good and beautiful work bequeathed to us by the past, whilst advancing with prudence to future conquests.

I shall hardly be giving way to national partiality in saying that of all the Conservatoires with which I am acquainted, that of Paris approaches most nearly to this definition.

Next to it is the Conservatoire at Prague,[1] and if one takes into consideration the naturally immense difference

[1] I am not yet acquainted with the interior organisation of the Conservatoire at Brussels, of which M. Fétis is the skilful director. I only know that it is one of the largest in existence.

between the resources of a town like Prague and those of the capital of France, it is really praising it highly to put it in the second rank. It cannot be so rich as ours in any respect, there are fewer teachers and pupils, and the efforts of the authorities for its maintenance are not to be compared with the constant and energetic support lent to the Conservatoire at Paris by the Fine Arts Department; still, the study is good, and so is the spirit of the school.

Among the masters under M. Kittl's superintendence, I must make particular mention of Messrs. Mildner and Gordigiani. The former, a clever violinist, who also, as I have already told you, holds the office of concert-meister and solo violinist at the Prague Theatre, has turned out a considerable number of clever pupils. The second, reputed to be one of the best singing-masters that Italy has sent to Germany, is also a composer of merit. I know a *Stabat* by him for two choirs in a very fine style, and an opera, *Consuelo*, of which both words and music are his, remarkable for its natural melodies, and for a graceful sobriety of orchestration, of which few examples are to be found in these days.

It has been said sometimes, and I think rightly, that it is useful to a composer to *know how to sing*: perhaps it is still more necessary for a singing-master to *know how to compose*. In fact, it is in the accurate appreciation of qualities which the composer can or ought to insist upon from his interpreters, that the singing-master will find his most solid point of support in the proper superintendence of his pupils' studies. A singing-master who composes will not, unless he be detestably mediocre, have any fancy for those eccentricities which are threatening to destroy the art of singing in three-fourths of musical

Europe. He will not teach his pupils to despise time and rhythm. He will never allow them to take the insolent liberty of embellishing their songs at random, when an exact reproduction is imperatively required by the expression of the phrase, the character of the personage, and the style of the author. Neither will he allow them to get into the habit of looking upon the private interest of their own vocal organ as the only one to guide them when singing in public. And consequently, his pupils will not disfigure the most exquisite works in order to avoid the poor notes in their voices, or to make a long and absurd display of the good ones.

Such a master will not fail to study the art of singing with his pupils, and to convince them that it does not consist in the execution of feats of strength, destitute of reason or musical interest; still less in forcing the larynx to utter sounds which are unnatural, either from their depth, height, violence, or duration. He will require a reason for each of their *accents*, and will show them that if it is shocking to sing out of tune, it is not less shocking to sing with false expression; that if a note hurts the ear when too sharp or too flat, a passage given loud when it ought to be soft, or weak when it should be strong, or stately when it ought to be simple, is even more painfully irritating to an intelligent hearer, does more serious wrong to the work thus misinterpreted, and proves conclusively that the singer is a mere idiot, however splendid his voice and his vocalisation may be. The pupils of such a master will not—as is too often the case—coolly try the patience of the conductor with the most grotesque rhythmical eccentricities; unduly lengthening any bar,

slackening the time of a phrase or a single bar in order to hurry the next; keeping the poor man's arm in the air till a favourite note has been prolonged to the utmost; joining in fact in a conspiracy against art and good taste, and becoming the frantic slaves of folly and leather lungs.

Neither will such a master suffer his pupils to enter upon the study of fine works without understanding the subject of the poem, and knowing the historical part; without having reflected upon the passions called into play by the author, and attempted thoroughly to enter into their character. No singer would leave his class without having learnt to respect the language in which he sang, and the rules imposed upon the connection of the words by the very nature of rhythm and euphony. Moreover, he would make his pupils clearly understand that if, in the pauses or elsewhere, they permitted themselves to depart from the lines laid down by the author, such departures must at least be in harmony with the accompaniment, and that the virtuoso must never be toying with the notes of the chord of the six-four when the orchestra is sustaining that of the dominant, and *vice versâ*.

The conversations I had with M. Gordigiani, and the method of such of his pupils as I have heard, showed me that he was entirely of this opinion.

If, as I shall presently show, special classes are greatly wanting in the Conservatoire at Paris, we need not be surprised at finding the same defect at Prague. Indeed, the teaching there is far from being complete. Still, it has produced a fair number of pupils capable at this moment of a satisfactory and wholly unassisted performance of such difficult works as Beethoven's Choral

symphony. This is doubtless one of M. Kittl's greatest results. If a Conservatoire is an institution intended for the maintenance of all departments of musical art and the instruction directly pertaining to them, it is strange that not even in Paris should they have yet succeeded in carrying out such a programme. For a long time our instrumental school had no classes for the study of the most indispensable instruments, such as the double-bass, trombone, trumpet, and harp. True, these gaps have been filled up of late years, but, unhappily, there are many others, which I shall now point out. My remarks will doubtless call forth loud exclamations from many, who will consider them idiotic, absurd, and ridiculous. I hope they may! I shall proceed accordingly to say:

(1) That the study of the Violin in Paris is very incomplete; the pupils are not taught the *pizzicato*, and the result is that many passages, *arpeggioed* on the four strings, or *staccatoed* with two or three fingers on the same string, in a quick movement—perfectly practicable passages, since they can be performed by guitar-players on the violin—are declared impossible by violinists, and consequently prohibited to composers. It is possible that in fifty years some director will be bold enough to insist upon having the *pizzicato* taught in the violin classes. Then, when artists shall have mastered the novel and piquant effects resulting from such a study, they will have good ground for jeering at the violinists of the last century, who used to cry out, "Take care of the C!" Neither is the use of harmonics properly studied in a business-like manner. The little that our young violinists know about it they have learnt by themselves, since the appearance of Paganini.

(2) It is to be regretted that there is no special class for the Viola. This instrument, notwithstanding its relation to the violin, needs individual study and constant practice if it is to be properly played. It is an antique, absurd, and deplorable prejudice that has hitherto handed over the performance of the tenor part to second or third rate violinists. Whenever a violinist is mediocre, it is said, "He will make a capital tenor." From the stand-point of modern music this is false reasoning, for trashy parts are no longer written for the orchestra (at least by the great masters), but each has an interest proportionate to the effect to be produced, and a condition of inferiority in any one part with regard to any other is not recognised.

(3) Another great mistake was never to have taught the *Corno di bassetto* in the clarinet classes until now, the absurd and disastrous effect of it being that many of Mozart's pieces could not be performed in France as written. Nowadays, the improvements brought into the bass clarinet by Adolphe Sax make it capable of performing anything written for the basset-horn, indeed more so, its bass compass exceeding that of the basset-horn by a minor third. Moreover, its tone is very like that of the basset-horn, only much finer; it ought therefore to be studied conjointly with the soprano clarinets and those in E flat, G, and high A flat.

(4) The saxophone, a new member of the clarinet family, and really of value when the performer can bring out its characteristics, ought nowadays to have a separate place in the Conservatoire classes, for the time is not far distant when composers will wish to employ it.

(5) We have no Ophicleide class, and the result is that, out of a hundred or a hundred and fifty players of

that difficult instrument in Paris at the present moment, there are scarcely three fit to be admitted into a well arranged orchestra. M. Caussinus is the only proficient in it.

(6) We have no class for the Bass tuba, a powerful cylindered instrument, differing from the ophicleide in tone, mechanism, and compass, and taking exactly the same place among trumpets that the double-bass does in the violin family. And yet in these days most composers make use of either an ophicleide or a bass tuba in their scores, sometimes of both.

(7) The Sax-horn and the Cornet à piston ought both to be taught in our Conservatoire, being now in general use, especially the cornet.

(8) There is no instruction whatever in any percussion instrument; and yet, is there a single orchestra in Europe, great or small, that does not boast a kettle-drummer? There is a man in every orchestra who goes by that name, but how many real players are there? how many artistic musicians familiar with all the difficulties of rhythm, thoroughly masters of the mechanism (less easy than is supposed) of that instrument, and gifted with an ear sufficiently trained to be able to *tune* it and change the pitch with certainty, even during the performance of a piece, and amid all the harmonic murmur of the orchestra? How many kettle-drummers are there of this description? I declare I only know two or three in all Europe, besides M. Poussard of the Paris Opéra. And you know how many orchestras I have been allowed to examine during the last nine or ten years. Most of the drummers I have met do not even know how to hold their drumsticks, and consequently find it impossible to produce a real *tremolo* or roll. Well, a drummer who

cannot make a good roll with proper light and shade is good for nothing.

There ought, therefore, to be a class in every Conservatoire for percussion instruments, where first-rate musicians should thoroughly teach the use of the Kettle-drum, the Tambourine, and the Military drum. The now intolerable custom (already abandoned by Beethoven and certain others) of treating percussion instruments in a coarse and stupid way, or of neglecting them altogether, has doubtless contributed to the long maintenance of a more or less unfavourable feeling against them. From their having hitherto been employed by composers only to produce more or less unpleasant noises, or merely to mark the accented times in the bar, it was concluded that they were fit for nothing else, had no other mission in the orchestra, and nothing better to claim, and that it was therefore quite unnecessary either to study the mechanism with care or to be a real musician, in order to play them. Now, to play kettle-drum or big-drum parts in modern compositions, one really ought to be a very good musician; and this brings me to the mention of another gap, perhaps the most serious of all, in the instruction at all Conservatoires, that of Paris included.

(9) *There is no class for rhythm*, devoted to initiating all pupils without exception, whether singers or instrumentalists, into the various difficulties of the division of time. Hence that insupportable tendency of most French or Italian musicians to mark the loud beats in the bar, and reduce everything to a monotonous phraseology. Hence also the impossibility so often found in performing compositions in syncopated style with any nicety; such, for example, as the charming airs so popular in Spain (which we call absurd). French and

Italian singers are very far from being able to *play with the rhythm;* and when they do attempt it, feel puzzled, and show a heaviness and awkwardness which makes their attempt most ineffective. Hence their hatred for everything that is not what they call *square*, or, as you and I would say, *insipid*. Hence their puerile and absurd ideas about *carrure*, and their astonishment when they come across songs differing in form and accent from those invariably adopted in France and Italy. Hence that indolence of performers in general who are used to being supported and guided by marking the time, and by an accentuation that can always be foreseen, like children who cannot walk except by the help of the go-cart. Beethoven's symphonies have forcibly broken a great many of our Paris players of these puerile habits, and given them a taste for piquant and original rhythm. But as nothing of the same sort has ever been attempted with which to wake up singers, it follows as a matter of course that their torpor continues, and that in order to get them out of it they must be subjected for some time to a particular *régime*. For them a *rhythm* class would be of special advantage, though a large number of instrumentalists also might derive much benefit from it.

A perfect Conservatoire, jealous of keeping up the tradition of the interesting facts and remarkable works bequeathed to us by the past, and of the various revolutions in art, should have a professorship of Musical History; and the professor should carry out the objects of his chair, not merely by verbal and written instruction, but also by illustrative and adequate performances of such fine works as are worthy of being remembered. Then we should not see scholars, and men of intellect,

as ignorant as Hottentots about the most magnificent works of great masters still living; the taste of musicians thus enlightened would become very different, their ideas would grow wider and far more elevated than at present, and finally, we should find more artists than artisans engaged in the practice of music.

H. B.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Prague.

Letter VI.—To Monsieur Humbert Ferrand.

There is another most important class wanting in all modern Conservatoires, which to my mind is becoming more essential every day, namely, that for Instrumentation. That branch of the composer's art has been so greatly developed of late years, as to have attracted the attention both of the critics and the public. It has, however, also served only too often to mask the poverty of a composer's ideas, to ape real energy, and counterfeit the power of inspiration, and, even in the hands of really able and meritorious writers, it has become a pretext for incalculable abuses, monstrous exaggerations, and ridiculous nonsense. It is easy to imagine to what excesses the example of such masters have beguiled their followers. But these very excesses prove the regular and irregular use now made of instrumentation, a blind use in general, and, when not led by chance, guided by the most pitiable routine. For it does not follow that because most composers make more use of instruments than their predecessors, they are better acquainted with the force, character, and action of each member of the instrumental family, and the various ties of sympathy

uniting them. Far from this, many illustrious composers are still quite ignorant of the most elementary part of the science, namely, the *compass* of many of the instruments. One composer, to my certain knowledge, knew nothing of that of the flute. Of that of the brass in general and trombones in particular, they have but a very vague idea; and accordingly you may remark in most modern as in ancient works, the prudent reserve with which their authors confine themselves to the middle range of those instruments, avoiding with equal care either an ascent or descent, because afraid to overstep the limits of what they know accurately, and ignorant of the advantage to be derived from the notes at either extremity of the scale. Instrumentation in the present day therefore is like a fashionable foreign language, which many people affect to speak without having learnt it, and therefore speak without properly understanding it, and with a great many barbarisms.

Such a class in Conservatoires, besides being useful to composition students, would be of great service to such as are called on to become conductors. Indeed, it may readily be imagined that a conductor who is not thoroughly master of all the resources of instrumentation is not very much of a musician, and it is plainly of the greatest necessity that he should at least know as much of the *exact compass and mechanism* of the instrument as the musicians under his direction, if not more. Otherwise, he can only offer them timid suggestions, especially when it is a question of some unusual combination, or bold or difficult passage, about which indolence or incapacity would drive the performer to exclaim: "It cannot be done! There is no such note! It is unplayable!" and other aphorisms, after the fashion of ignorant mediocrity. Then the

conductor can answer: "You are mistaken. It is quite feasible. If you set about it in such and such a manner you will master the difficulty!" or else: "It is difficult certainly, but if it remains an impossibility to you after having worked at it for some days, I can only conclude that you are not master of your instrument, and shall be obliged to have recourse to a more skilful artist."

In the opposite case—a too frequent one I must admit—where the composer, for want of proper knowledge, torments the artist, however skilful, by trying to obtain impossibilities, the conductor who is sure of his facts will be able to take part with the musicians against the composer, and correct his blunders.

Indeed, as I am on the subject of conductors, I may as well say that it would not be at all a bad plan in a well organised Conservatoire, as far as possible, to teach the art of conducting, to composition students especially, so that on an emergency they may at any rate conduct the performance of their own works without making fools of themselves, and distracting the musicians instead of helping them. It is generally supposed that every composer is a born conductor, that is to say, that he knows the art of conducting without having learnt it. Beethoven[1] was an illustrious example of the falsity of this opinion, and one might name a host of other masters whose compositions are held in general esteem, but who, the moment they take up the baton, neither mark time nor *nuance*, and would indeed literally bring the musicians to grief, if the latter did not quickly perceive the inexperience of their leader and

[1] [Schumann was an equally poor conductor, though in a very different style.]

make up their minds to pay no attention to his irregular motions. There are two distinct parts in the work of a conductor; the first and easiest consists simply in conducting the performance of a work already known to the players, and which, to use a phrase in vogue at the theatres, has been *got up* beforehand. The second consists in directing the study of a work unknown to the performers, clearly setting forth the author's conception, and rendering it salient and distinct, obtaining from the band that fidelity, unity, and expression without which there can be no real music, identifying the players with himself, exciting them by his own zeal, animating them with his own enthusiasm, and imparting to them his own inspiration.

But to do this, besides the elementary knowledge acquired by study and practice, and those qualities of feeling and instinct which are the gift of nature alone, and the absence or presence of which makes the conductor either the composer's best interpreter or his most formidable enemy, there is one more art indispensable to the conductor, namely, that of *reading the score.*

He who employs a *simplified score,* or a simple first violin part, as is often done in our day, more especially in France,[1] cannot detect half the mistakes in the performance; and if he does point out a fault, exposes himself to some such answer as this from the musician addressed: "What do you know about it? You have not got my part"—one of the least of the inconveniences arising from this deplorable system.[2]

[1] Habeneck used only to use a first violin part, when conducting the Conservatoire concerts, and in this respect his successors have taken care to imitate him.

[2] [Another revelation of the curious state of things in orchestras of "fifty years since."]

From whence I conclude that if you want to form perfect and genuine conductors, you ought by all means to familiarise them with the reading of the score; and those who cannot master that difficulty, though they be learned in instrumentation—even composers—and also up in the mechanisms of rhythmical time, are really only half masters of their art.

Now I must tell you of the Singing Academy at Prague. Organised much in the same way as all the others in Germany, it consists almost entirely of amateurs, drawn from the middle classes. The chorus numbers about ninety, and M. Scraub, jun., is the director. Most of the members are musicians and readers, with fresh and thrilling voices. The aim and object of the institution is not the study and performance of old works to the utter exclusion of all modern productions, as is the case with so many academies. These latter — pardon me the expression — are nothing but musical coteries or consistories, where the unknown living are gently calumniated under the pretext of enthusiasm for the dead; where Baal is preached against, and all so-called golden calves, together with their worshippers, are handed over to execration. In these temples of musical Protestantism, a cross-grained, jealous, and intolerant worship is maintained—not of the *beautiful*, whatever its age, but of the *old*, whatever its worth. They have their Bible, and their two or three evangelists, which the faithful read and re-read exclusively and without relaxation, interpreting passages in a thousand different ways, the real direct meaning of which is quite self-evident; finding a profound and mystical idea where the rest of the world can see nothing but horror and barbarity, and ever ready to sing Hosanna! even when the God of

Moses commands them to *crush the heads of little children against the wall, to have their blood licked up by the dogs, forbidding His people to shed one tear of pity at the sight!*

Let us be on our guard against such fanatics, who are enough to destroy the respect and admiration which all pious souls owe to the past.

The Singing Academy at Prague has, I repeat, nothing in common with these, and its leader is an intelligent artist. Accordingly, not merely the modern but the living are admitted within its musical sanctuary. Side by side with the oratorios of Bach or Handel, he places the study of *Moses* by M. Marx, the learned critic and theorist, still living at Berlin, or some piece from an opera or a hymn, with no pretensions to academical regard merely on account of their age. Indeed, the first time I attended a gathering of the Prague Singing Society, I remarked a charming and original choral fantasia on national Bohemian airs, composed by M. Scraub. Never before or since have I heard such piquant combinations performed with so much *verve* and fire, such unexpected contrasts, unity, and fine sonority. When I thought of the unwieldy compilations of chords that I had too often been obliged to endure on similar occasions, the performance of that spirited work produced the same effect upon my ear as the fresh balmy air of a forest, on a beautiful summer's night, would have upon the lungs of a prisoner newly escaped from the fetid atmosphere of his dungeon.

The Academy of Sophie (as I have already said, it bore that name) gives a certain number of public *séances* annually, conducted by the two Scraubs, on which occasions the theatre orchestra, under the leadership of the

elder, is added to his brother's chorus. These grand performances, carefully and patiently prepared beforehand, always draw a numerous and select audience, to whom music is neither a weariness nor a diversion, but a noble and serious passion demanding the whole strength of their intelligence and feeling, and all the enthusiasm of their hearts.

I promised to tell you about the *maîtrise*, or cathedral-school, as well as the military music; but if I mention these, I confess it is only to make the list complete. Religious music! military music! The words make a great figure in an account of musical observations. But I never had the least intention of keeping my promise with respect to those two sources of musical wealth in Bohemia, for this very good reason, that I don't know enough of them to speak properly. I have never yet been able to write upon matters of which I know nothing. Perhaps with good examples I may come to it in time. But, meanwhile, you will excuse me if I hold my tongue. Notwithstanding M. Scraub's repeated invitations, I never set my foot in a church during the whole of my stay at Prague. And yet I am, as you know, very devout, so there must have been some grave reason for my apparent indifference in the matter of sacred music, or I must have been entirely overwhelmed by the terror of *gigues* for the organ and fugues on the word Amen.

As for military bands, I will tell you a story to justify my silence. On a certain fête-day, I heard the band of the regiment then garrisoned at Prague play Haydn's hymn to the Emperor for four successive hours! This touching, patriarchal, and majestic song is so simple, that I really could not appreciate the merit of the performers as I listened to it. An orchestra not able to play such a piece

tolerably, must to my mind be composed of musicians who did not know the gamut. These, however, played *in tune*, which is wonderfully rare, especially in military bands. Besides, I do not know if the regiment in question was a Bohemian one, or from some other part of the empire of Austria, and it would be too absurd to establish a theory, which well-informed people might ridicule by saying: "The Bohemian musicians you are speaking of are Hungarians, Austrians, or Milanese."

Among the composers and virtuosi of Prague, belonging neither to the theatre, nor to the Conservatoire, nor to the Singing Academy, I must specify Dreyschock, Pischek, and the venerable Tomaschek. The two former enjoy a European reputation. I have often heard both one and the other at Vienna, Pesth, Frankfort, and elsewhere, but never at Prague. Having, it appears, been ill received by their compatriots at their first performance, Dreyschock and Pischek made up their minds in future never to exhibit their talents to the appreciation or depreciation of the Bohemians. That no one is a prophet in his own country is true of all times and countries. The inhabitants of Prague are now, however, beginning to listen to the murmurs of admiration, which in a hundred different ways and from a hundred points of the horizon, are repeating that Dreyschock is an admirable pianist! Pischek is one of the best singers in Europe! and are beginning to suspect that they may possibly have done them injustice.

M. Tomaschek is well known in Bohemia, and even at Vienna, where his works are greatly appreciated. Not having the same reasons as Dreyschock and Pischek for being severe to the inhabitants of Prague, he allows them occasionally to hear his compositions. I was

present at one concert where thirty-one out of thirty-two pieces were by M. Tomaschek. Among them was a new setting of the *Erl King*, quite unlike Schubert's. Someone (for there are people who find fault with everything) drew a comparison between the accompaniment of this piece and that of Schubert's ballad, in which the furious gallop[1] of the horse is reproduced, and declared that M. Tomaschek had mimicked the gait of a priest's nag. An intelligent critic, however, more capable than his neighbours of judging of the philosophy of art, annihilated this irony, and replied with great good sense: "It is just because Schubert made that unlucky horse gallop so wildly that it has foundered, and is now forced to go at a foot pace." M. Tomaschek has written for the last thirty years at least, and so the list of his works must be rather formidable.

There is one more amiable virtuoso to be mentioned, and her talent, only too rare in Germany, was of the greatest assistance to myself personally. This was Mdlle. Claudius, a first-rate harpist, an excellent musician, and Parish-Alvars' best pupil. Mdlle. Claudius has also a remarkable voice, and often sings solos with marked success at the Singing Academy, of which she is a member.

Of the public, what shall I tell you? . . . Louis XIV., wishing to pay Boileau a compliment about his lines on the passage of the Rhine, is reported to have said: "I would praise you more if you had not praised me so much." I am in the same predicament as the great king; I should write a beautiful eulogium on the sagacity, quickness, and feeling of the public at Prague if they had not treated me so well. I may say, however—

[1] [Who ever, before or since, connected the accompaniment of Schubert's *Erl King* with the galloping of a horse?]

since it is matter of public notoriety—that the Bohemians are the best musicians in Europe, and that love and feeling for music are universal in all classes of society. My concert was attended not only by the lower classes, but even by the peasants, to whom certain places were rendered accessible by the low prices; and I was able to judge of the interest this audience took in my musical efforts by their singularly *naïve* exclamations at the most unexpected effects, a proof that their memory was sufficiently well stocked to allow of their forming comparisons between the known and the unknown, the old and the new, the good and the bad. You will not, my dear friend, insist on my making a statement here of my opinions about the public in general; a volume would not suffice for the thorough study of that multiple being —by turns just, unjust, reasonable, capricious, *naïve*, malicious, enthusiastic, and scoffing, at one time so easily led, at another so rebellious. And besides, after devoting an entire volume to the solution of that problem, one would probably be no further advanced at the last stage than at the first. Voltaire himself left off being ironical on the subject, and after asking *how many fools it took to make a public*, ended his career by allowing himself to be crowned by those same fools at the Théâtre Français, and being exceedingly delighted with their approbation. So let us say no more about it, and let the public be what it is—a sea always more or less rough, but which would be more formidable to artists if calm.

I gave six concerts at Prague, either in the theatre or in Sophie's concert-room. At the latter, I remember to have had the delight of performing my symphony of *Romeo and Juliet*, for Liszt, for the first time. Several movements of the work were already known in Prague. The

vocal performance was grand, and only marred by one mishap. The young person who undertook the contralto solo had never yet sung in public. Notwithstanding her extreme timidity, all went well as long as she felt herself supported by other voices or instruments, but when she reached the passage in the prologue:

Le jeune Roméo plaignant sa destinée,

a real solo with no accompaniment, her voice began to tremble, and by the end of the phrase, where the harp comes in on the chord of E natural, she had got into an unknown key, more than a tone lower than E. Mdlle. Claudius, who was sitting close to my desk, dared not touch the strings of her harp. At last, after a moment's hesitation, she asked in a low voice:

"Had I better give the chord of E?"

"Certainly; we must get out of this."

And the inexorable chord rang out, hissing and shuddering like a spoonful of molten lead in cold water. The poor little singer nearly fainted at finding herself so abruptly set right, and as she did not understand French, I could not say anything to reassure her. Happily, however, she succeeded in recovering her self-possession before the *Premiers transports*, which she sang with great feeling and in perfect tune. The *rôle* of Father Laurence was perfectly interpreted by Strakaty, very impressively, and with real enthusiasm.

That day, having already encored several pieces, the public called for another, which the band implored me not to repeat; but as the shouts continued, M. Mildner took out his watch and held it up to show that the hour was too far advanced to allow of the orchestra remaining till the end of the concert if the piece were

played a second time, since there was an opera at seven o'clock. This clever pantomime saved us. At the end of the *séance*, just as I was begging Liszt to serve as my interpreter and thank the excellent singers, who had been devoting themselves to the careful study of my choruses for the last three weeks and had sung them so bravely, he was interrupted by them with an inverse proposal. Having exchanged a few words with them in German, he turned to me and said:

"My commission is changed, these gentlemen rather desire me to thank you for the pleasure you have given them in allowing them to perform your work, and to express their delight at your evident satisfaction."

That was indeed a day for me. I remember few like it. There was a supper afterwards, at which the artists and amateurs of Prague presented me with a silver cup, a *pendant* to the silver-gilt baton at the banquet at Vienna of which I told you. Most of the virtuosi, critics, and amateurs of the town were present, as well as one of my countrymen, the kindly and intellectual Prince de Rohan. Liszt was unanimously chosen to speak in the place of the president, who was not sufficiently familiar with French. At the first toast he made me a speech in the name of the assembly at least a quarter of an hour in length, with a warmth of heart, a flow of ideas, and a choice of expressions that many orators might have envied, and which had the effect of touching me deeply. Unhappily, if he spoke well he drank well too; the treacherous cup inaugurated by the guests overflowed with such oceans of champagne that all Liszt's eloquence was drowned in it. At two o'clock in the morning Belloni[1] and I were still in the street,

[1] Liszt's man of business.

trying to persuade him to wait till daylight for a duel which he insisted on fighting with a Bohemian who had drunk *better* than himself.

As the morning advanced we grew rather uneasy about Liszt, whose concert was to take place at noon. He was still asleep at half-past eleven; at last they awoke him, he gets into his carriage, reaches the concert-room, receives a triple volley of applause on his entrance, and plays better I believe than he had ever done before in his life.

Verily, there is a God for . . . pianists.

Farewell, my dear Ferrand; you will not complain, I fear, of the brevity of my letters. And yet I have not said all that I feel of affectionate regret for Prague and its inhabitants; but, as you know, I have a serious passion for music, and you can judge from that whether I like the Bohemians or not.

O Praga! quando te aspiciam!

H. B.

CHAPTER LXX.

Concert at Breslau—*The Damnation of Faust*—Patriotic German Critics—Failure of the Work at Paris—Resolution to visit Russia—Kindness of Friends.

In the preceding letters to M. Ferrand, I said nothing of my journey to Breslau. I do not know why I omitted it, for my stay in the Silesian capital was both pleasant and useful. Thanks to the warm assistance of several persons, among others M. Koeltlitz, a young artist of great merit, Dr. Naumann, a distinguished doctor and a real connoisseur among musical amateurs, and Hesse, the celebrated organist, I succeeded in giving a concert in the University hall (Aula Leopoldina), with very happy results. My audience came from all the neighbouring villages and suburbs of Breslau; the receipts far exceeded what I usually made in German towns, and the public gave a most brilliant reception to my compositions. This pleased me all the more that I had attended a concert the day after my arrival, where the audience never relaxed from its coldness for a moment, and dead silence followed the performance of even the Symphony in C minor. When I exclaimed against this reception of Beethoven, a lady, enthusiastic herself about the great master after her own fashion, told me I was mistaken. "The public," said she, "admire

that masterpiece as much as it can be admired, and if they do not applaud, it is *from respect.*" I must confess that this word, which would have had so deep a meaning in Paris, and in all places where the disgraceful manœuvres of the *claqueurs* are prevalent, made me feel very anxious. I was dreadfully afraid of being respected. Happily, this was not at all the case, and at my own concert, the assembly to whose respect I was evidently not sufficiently entitled, thought fit to treat me according to the vulgar custom adopted towards popular artists throughout Europe, and gave me most irreverent applause.

During these travels in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and Silesia, I began the composition of the legend of *Faust*, which I had long been planning. When I had once decided upon undertaking it, I also made up my mind to write nearly the whole of the book myself, as not more than one-sixth of the work was taken up by a translation of fragments of Goethe's poem made by Gérard Nerval twenty years before and then set to music by me, and by a few more scenes written by M. Gandonnière from notes given him before I left Paris.

Such being my decision, I attempted to write the verses for my music as I rolled along in my old German post-chaise. I began by Faust's invocation to Nature, not trying either to translate or even imitate, but only to use it as an inspiration, and extract all its musical substance. My attempt gave me hopes of being able to continue.

Nature immense, impénétrable et fière !
Toi seule donnes trêve à mon ennui sans fin !
Sur ton sein tout-puissant je sens moins ma misère,
Je retrouve ma force, et je crois vivre enfin.

Oui, soufflez, ouragans ; criez, forêts profondes ;
Croulez, rochers ; torrents, précipitez vos ondes !
À vos bruits souverains, ma voix aime à s'unir.
Forêts, rochers, torrents, je vous adore ! Mondes
Qui scintillez, vers vous s'élance le désir
D'un cœur trop vaste, et d'une âme altérée
D'un bonheur qui la fuit.

Once launched, I wrote the rest by degrees, as my musical ideas came to me, and composed the score with a facility I never experienced with any of my other works. I wrote when I could and where I could; in the coach, on the railroad, in steamboats, and even in towns, notwithstanding the various cares entailed by my concerts. Thus I wrote the introduction, *Le vieil hiver a fait place au printemps*, in an inn at Passau. At Vienna I did the Elbe scene, Mephistopheles' song, *Voici des roses*, and the sylphs' ballet.

I have already mentioned my writing a march at Vienna, in one night, on the Hungarian air of Rákóczy. The extraordinary effect it produced at Pesth made me resolve to introduce it into *Faust*, by taking the liberty of placing my hero in Hungary at the opening of the act, and making him present at the march of a Hungarian army across the plain. A German critic considered it most extraordinary in me to have made Faust travel in such a place. I do not see why, and I should not have hesitated in the least to bring him in in any other direction if it would have benefited the piece. I had not bound myself to follow Goethe's plot, and the most eccentric travels may be attributed to such a personage as Faust, without transgressing the bounds of possibility. Other German critics took up the same thesis, and attacked me with even greater violence about my modifications of Goethe's

text and plot, just as though there were no other *Faust* but Goethe's,[1] and as if it were possible to set the whole of such a poem to music without altering its arrangement. I was stupid enough to answer them in the preface to the *Damnation of Faust.* I have often wondered why I was never reproached about the book of *Romeo and Juliet,* which is not very like the immortal tragedy. No doubt because *Shakespeare was not a German.* Patriotism! Fetishism! Idiotcy!

One night, when I had lost my way in Pesth, I wrote the choral refrain of the *Ronde des Paysans* by the gaslight in a shop. At Prague I got up in the middle of the night to write down an air I was afraid of forgetting, the angels' chorus in Marguerite's apotheosis:

> Remonte au ciel, âme naïve,
> Que l'amour égara.

At Breslau I wrote the words and music of the students' Latin song: *Jam nox stellata velamina pandit.* On my return to France I composed the grand trio, *Ange adoré dont la céleste image,* while staying on a visit to the Baron de Montville, near Rouen.

The rest was written in Paris, but always improvised, either at my own house, or at the café, or in the Tuileries gardens, and even on a stone in the Boulevard du Temple. I did not search for ideas, I let them come, and they presented themselves in a most unforeseen manner. When at last the whole outline was sketched, I set to work to re-do the whole, touch up the different parts, unite and blend them together with all the patience and

[1] Marlow's, for example, and that of Spohr's opera, neither of which is in the least like Goethe's.

determination of which I am capable, and to finish off the instrumentation, which had been only indicated here and there. I look upon this as one of my best works, and hitherto the public seems to be of the same opinion.

To have written it was nothing. I wanted to bring it out, and then began all my misfortunes and miseries. The copying of the orchestral and vocal parts cost me an immense sum, and the numerous rehearsals on which I insisted, and the exorbitant price of sixteen hundred francs for the hire of the Opéra Comique, the only room then at my disposal, embarked me in an undertaking that was certain ruin. Still I persevered, being kept up by a specious reasoning that would have enticed anyone in my place. "When *Romeo and Juliet* was first performed," I reflected, "the eagerness of the public was so great that we had to issue *corridor tickets* to seat the crowd after the room was filled, and I had some small profits, notwithstanding the immense expenses. Since then my name has gone up in public opinion, and besides, my success in foreign parts has been so much talked of that it now carries a weight in France which was not formerly the case. The subject of *Faust* is quite as famous as that of *Romeo*. It is generally believed to be sympathetic to me, and I am thought likely to have treated it well. Everything combines, therefore, to make me hope there will be great curiosity to hear this new work, which is on a larger scale and more varied in effect than any of its predecessors, and its expenses will at any rate be covered."

Vain hope! Years had elapsed since the first performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the indifference of the Parisian public about everything concerning literature

and the arts had made incredible strides. At this period it had already ceased to be sufficiently interested, more especially in a musical work, to consent to be immured in the daytime (I never could give my concerts in the evening) in so unfashionable a theatre as that of the Opéra Comique. It was the end of November, 1846; snow was falling, the weather was dreadful. I had no fashionable cantatrice to sing the part of Marguerite. As for Roger, who did Faust, and Herman Léon, who took the part of Mephistopheles, they might be heard any day in this same theatre; moreover, they were no longer the fashion. The result was that *Faust* was twice performed to a half-empty room. The concert-going Parisian public, supposed to be fond of music, stayed quietly at home, caring as little about my new work as if I had been an obscure student at the Conservatoire; and these two performances at the Opéra Comique were no better attended than if they had been the most wretched operas on the list.

Nothing in all my artistic career ever wounded me so deeply as this unexpected indifference. It was a cruel discovery, but useful in the sense that I profited by it, and from that time forth never risked so much as a twenty-franc piece on the popularity of my music with the Parisian public. I sincerely hope this may never happen again, if I am to live a hundred years.[1] I was ruined, and in debt for a considerable sum. After

[1] I did not keep to this. After having written *L'Enfance du Christ*, I could not resist the temptation of bringing out the work in Paris. Its success was spontaneous, and so great as really to insult my former compositions. I also gave several concerts in Herz's concert-room, which, instead of ruining me, brought me in some thousand francs. (1858.)

two days of inexpressible anguish, I perceived a way of extricating myself from my difficulties by going to Russia. But money was needed for the journey, the more so as I did not wish to leave a single debt behind me. The greatest comfort arose, however, out of these trying circumstances through the cordiality of my friends. I received offers of help on all sides as soon as it was known that I had to go to St. Petersburg, to try and repair my losses from the performance of my last work in Paris. M. Bertin advanced me one thousand francs from the funds of the *Journal des Débats;* some of my friends lent me five hundred francs, others six or seven hundred; one young German, M. Friedland, whom I had known in Prague, advanced me twelve hundred francs; Sax did the same, though himself in difficulties; and finally, Hetzel the publisher, who has since played a very important part in the Republican Government, and was then only one of my ordinary acquaintances, met me by chance at a café and said:

"So you are going to Russia."

"Yes."

"It is a very expensive journey, particularly in winter; if you should want a bank note for a thousand francs, will you allow me to offer it to you?"

I accepted as frankly as the good Hetzel offered it, and thus I was enabled to face everyone and fix the day for my departure.

I believe I have already made this remark, but I do not mind repeating it here, that if I have come across a good many villains and scamps in my life I have also been singularly blessed in the opposite respect, and few artists have met with warmer hearts and more generous devotion

than myself. You, good men who have doubtless long since forgotten your noble conduct towards me, let me recall it to you in these pages, thank you for it most heartily, press your hands, and tell you of the secret pleasure with which I think of my obligations to all of you.

RUSSIAN JOURNEY.

CHAPTER LXXI.

A Musical Courier—M. Nernst—Sledges—Snow—The Counts Wielhorski—General Lwoff—My first Concert—The Empress—I make my fortune—Journey to Moscow—Ludicrous obstacle—The Grand Marshal—Youthful melomaniacs—Cannons at the Kremlin.

Lent is the best season for giving concerts at St. Petersburg. It occupies the entire month of March, when the theatres are all closed. I left Paris on the 14th of February, 1847. The ground was covered with snow six inches deep, and during the fortnight that elapsed before I reached St. Petersburg, I never once lost sight of it. Indeed, it had fallen so heavily in Belgium that my train was compelled to stop at Tirlemont for several hours, while the rails were being cleared. It may be imagined what I suffered the week after, when I reached the other side of the Niemen.

I only stayed a few hours at Berlin to ask for a letter of introduction from the King of Prussia to his sister the Empress of Russia, which (with his usual kindness) His Majesty sent me immediately. While posting from Berlin to Tilsit I had the ill-luck to have a music-mad courier, who tormented me dreadfully the whole time I was with him. No sooner had this man seen my name on his

travelling papers than he conceived the idea of making capital out of me during the journey, and in the following manner. He had a mania for composing polkas and waltzes for the piano. He used to stop at the post-houses sometimes for an unconscionable time, and there, while I supposed him to be reckoning with the landlord, he was engaged in ruling music paper and jotting down the dance tune he had been whistling for the last three hours. After which, he was kind enough to give the word of departure, and returning to the carriage at once presented me with his polka or waltz, together with a pencil for me to write the bass and harmony to it. This done, there were endless comments, whys and wherefores, amazements and raptures, which amused me a good deal the first time, but when repeated too often made me curse my brave courier's ignorance of French and music pretty freely. I certainly should never have had such an adventure in France. On arriving at Tilsit I asked for the post-master, M. Nernst (I shall say presently how I came to know his name and reckon on his good-nature). His office was pointed out to me. I went in and perceived a big man in a cloth cap, with a severe countenance, which however betrayed both shrewdness and benevolence. He remained seated on his high stool when I first went in.

"M. Nernst?" said I, with a bow.

"The same, sir; to whom have I the honour of speaking?"

"To M. Hector Berlioz."

"What! Nothing less?" he exclaimed, bounding off his seat, and falling on his feet before me, cap in hand.

Whereupon the worthy man overwhelmed me with all sorts of attentions and civilities, which he redoubled

when he knew who had given me my letter of introduction.

"Be sure to ask for Nernst, the post-master, as you pass through Tilsit," one of my Paris friends had said to me. "He is an excellent man, and also well-informed and literary. He may possibly be of use to you." It was no other than Balzac who gave me this advice on the eve of my departure, at the corner where I met him at eleven o'clock at night. He had himself been in Russia only a short time before. On hearing that I was going to give concerts at St. Petersburg, he said quite seriously: "You will come back with a hundred and fifty thousand francs. I know the country; you can't bring away less." That great mind had the weakness of always and everywhere seeing fortunes to be made, of which he felt so confident that he would willingly have asked a banker to discount them on the spot. His dreams were of millions, and the innumerable deceptions he underwent on that point all through his life could never disabuse his mind of that perpetual mirage. I smiled at his estimate of the result of my travels, without appearing to doubt its correctness. It will soon be seen that if my concerts at St. Petersburg and Moscow produced more than I had hoped for, I succeeded, notwithstanding, in bringing back a good deal less than the hundred and fifty thousand francs predicted by Balzac.

That rare writer and incomparable anatomist of the very heart of modern French society was, as may easily be imagined, a fruitful subject of conversation with M. Nernst and myself. He gave me very interesting details about Balzac, his hopes of marriage and his love affairs in Galicia. For the rest, he is one of that small number of foreigners who may be allowed to admire Balzac

passionately, for he knows French well enough to understand him.

I remember that when I told my family about this episode in my journey, my father burst into a fit of laughter at M. Nernst's exclamation, "*Rien que ça!*" on hearing my name. He was already much enfeebled and sadly ailing; but the *naïf* pride he felt, notwithstanding his philosophy, at this original proof of his son's celebrity, displayed itself thus almost involuntarily.

"*Rien que ça!*" he repeated, with renewed laughter. "And you say it was at Tilsit?"

"Yes, on the banks of the Niemen, at the extreme frontier of Prussia."

"*Rien que ça!*"

And his laughter broke out afresh every time he said the words.

Having thus rested for a few hours at Tilsit, I began the most painful part of my journey, furnished with instructions from M. Nernst, and warmed by several glasses of a most delicious curaçoa which he was never tired of pressing upon me. A post-chaise brought me to Taurogen, on the Russian frontier, and there I had to shut myself up in an iron sledge, which I never quitted till I reached St. Petersburg; having undergone tortures, the very existence of which I had never suspected, for four weary days and as many terrible nights. In fact, in this hermetically sealed metal box, into which, however, the snow-dust succeeds in penetrating and powdering your face, you are ceaselessly and violently shaken, like shot in a bottle; the result of which is a great many contusions on the head and limbs, caused by perpetual shocks from the sides of the sledge. I also suffered from an unspeakable discomfort and nausea that may

fairly be called *snow-sickness*, on account of its likeness to that produced by the sea.

In our climate it is generally believed that Russian sledges glide over the snow, drawn by swift horses, as over a frozen lake, and so one forms quite a charming idea of this mode of travelling. And this is true when one has the good fortune to meet with even ground, and untrodden or well-trodden snow; the sledge then certainly goes with marvellous rapidity and smoothness. But you do not find a road like this one mile in fifty. The rest of the way is all cut up into transverse ruts, formed by the peasants' carts drawing huge loads of wood, and looks just like a stormy sea solidified by the cold. The intervals separating these snowy waves form regular deep ditches, into which the sledge, having first been painfully hoisted up to the summit, falls with a crash enough to split your head; especially at night, when you are less prepared for it, or have dropped off for a few minutes to sleep. If the ruts are less sudden, the sledge follows them with regularity, going up and down like a boat on the waves, and hence the sickness of which I spoke. I say nothing of the cold; but, towards the middle of the night, notwithstanding all one's fur bags, cloaks, and pelisses, and the hay stuffed into the sledge, it becomes quite unbearable. One feels as if one's body were being pricked all over by a million needles, and no matter how warmly clad, one trembles as much from the fear of being frozen to death as from the cold itself.

On a fine day, when the brilliant sunshine allowed me to see the whole of the wild and dazzling expanse, I could not help thinking of the ever famous retreat of our unfortunate army. I seemed to see the wretched soldiers, destitute of food and clothing, without boots,

without brandy, without either mental or physical strength, the majority wounded, dragging themselves along like spectres by day, and stretched shelterless at night like corpses on that terrible snow, in weather even more fearful than that by which I myself was tormented. And I wondered how even one had been able to resist such suffering and return alive from that frozen mountain. Death must be desperately hard for man.

Then I laughed at the stupidity of the famished crows who followed my sledge on torpid wings, alighting on the road every now and then to feast upon the horse-dung, and then crouching on their bellies and trying to thaw their half-frozen claws, when they might have found at will a mild climate, fertile fields, and abundant pasture without trouble by a flight of a few hours southwards. Is their native country then dear to true-hearted crows? If indeed, to quote our own soldiers, Russia can be called a *country!*

At last, one Sunday evening, a fortnight from the time I left Paris, I arrived, starved with cold, at the proud northern capital yclept St. Petersburg. From all I had heard in France of the severity of the imperial police, I expected that my bales of music would be confiscated for a week at least; since, at the frontier, they had been scarcely touched. But I was not even asked to state their contents at the police-office, and was allowed to take them off to the hotel at once, which I confess was an agreeable surprise.

I had not been installed an hour in my hot room when I received a visit of welcome from M. de Lenz, an extremely learned and amiable amateur,[1] whom I had met in Paris some years before.

[1] [M. de Lenz is the author of an enthusiastic and most interesting

"I have come from Count Michel Wielhorski's," said he, "where we have just heard of your arrival. He is giving a grand soirée, at which all the musical authorities of St. Petersburg are assembled, and the count has sent me to say how charmed he will be to receive you."

"But how could he know I was here?"

"Well, he does know. . . . Do come."

I only waited to thaw my face, shave, and make my toilette, and then followed my kind friend to Count Wielhorski's. I ought to say the counts, for there are two brothers, living together, and equally intelligent and eager in their love of music. Their house at St. Petersburg is a little Department of the Fine Arts, thanks to the authority they derive from their justly renowned taste, and to the influence they exercise through their large fortune and numerous relations, and to their official position at Court about the Emperor and Empress.

They gave me a most gracious welcome, and soon presented me to all the principal persons, virtuosi, and men of letters assembled in their *salon*. I made the acquaintance of the delightful Henri Romberg, then conductor at the Italian Theatre, who with rare good-nature immediately constituted himself my musical guide at St. Petersburg, and manager of my body of performers. The day of my first concert was fixed that very evening by General Guédéonoff, director of the imperial theatres. The assembly-room of the nobles was chosen for it, the price of the places fixed at three silver roubles (twelve francs), and thus, four hours after my arrival,

book on "the three styles" of Beethoven in French, and of a Life and analytical catalogue of his works, which, for the date of its publication, before Nottebohm's researches into the sketch-books, is a wonderful performance.]

I found myself *in medias res.* Romberg came for me the next day, and we scoured the town together in search of the necessary artists. My orchestra was soon formed. We also soon succeeded in collecting a large and well formed choir through the good offices of General Lwoff,[1] conductor of the imperial band, and a composer and virtuoso of rare merit, who from the first showed me the most sincere musical fellowship. I now only wanted two solo singers, a bass and a tenor, for the two first acts of *Faust.* Versing, the bass of the German Theatre, undertook the part of Mephistopheles, and Ricciardi, an Italian tenor I had formerly known in Paris, that of Faust; the only drawback was, that he had to sing in French and Mephistopheles in German. The Russian public, being equally familiar with both, did not object to this absurd mixture. I had to have all the voice parts recopied in Russian for the benefit of the chorus-singers, who knew no other characters, though they sang in German. After the first rehearsal, Romberg assured me that the German translation, which had put me to great expense in Paris, was a detestable one, and so unmetrical that it was impossible to sing it. He hastened to correct the grosser blunders, so that my first concert might not be postponed; but another translator was inevitable for the future, and I was fortunate enough to find one in M. Minzlaff, who was at once a musician and a *littérateur*, and performed the task perfectly. My first concert was a splendid performance. The orchestra and choir were both large and well-trained, and I had also a military band, provided by General Lwoff, and chosen from the musicians of the Imperial Guard.

Romberg and Maurer, the two kapell-meisters of St.

[1] Composer of the well-known Russian National Hymn.

Petersburg, actually undertook the parts of the little old-fashioned cymbals in the *Queen Mab scherzo*. My artists were animated throughout with the best of spirits, and a zeal that augured well for the performance, and moreover I found a compatriot among them who seconded me with all his might—Tajan-Rogé, a clever cello player and a genuine artist. My programme consisted of the overture to the *Carnaval Romain*, the two first acts of *Faust*, the *Queen Mab scherzo*, and the *Apotheosis* from the *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale*. The enthusiasm of the vast and brilliant audience filling the immense room exceeded anything I could ever have imagined in that line, more especially for *Faust*. The clapping and shouting, encores, and recalls were enough to make one giddy. At the end of the first act of *Faust*, the Empress sent for me by Count Michel Wielhorski, and I was obliged accordingly to appear before Her Majesty as I was, red, out of breath, and with loose cravat—in a word, in my musical get-up.

Her Majesty gave me a most flattering reception, presented me to her sons, spoke of her brother the King of Prussia, and the interest he took in me, as shown by his letters, praised my music much, and expressed herself astonished at the exceptional performance I had managed to secure. After a quarter of an hour's conversation, she said:

"I must now send you back to your audience, which is too excited to be kept waiting any longer."

I then left, full of gratitude for all these imperial courtesies.

After the sylph-chorus, the public was really almost beside itself. This sort of refined, aerial music, to which you have to listen with all your ears in order to catch its

low tones, was evidently quite unexpected, and I confess the moment was an intoxicating one for me. I was a little uneasy with regard to the non-appearance of the military band as the moment approached for the *Apotheosis*, with which the concert was to finish up. I feared that if they entered the orchestra in the middle of the piece, they would make a noise and spoil the effect. But I little knew Russian discipline. When I turned round at the close of the *scherzo*, which was played amid the most profound silence, I beheld my sixty musicians at their posts, instruments in hand. They had taken their places unobserved by anyone. That was something like!

At last, when the concert was over, the embraces concluded, and a bottle of beer consumed, I bethought me of inquiring about the financial result of the experiment. Receipt, *eighteen thousand francs;* expenses, six thousand; clear profit, twelve thousand francs. I was saved!

Then I turned mechanically to the south-west, towards Paris, and could not refrain from murmuring:

"You dear Parisians!"

Ten days afterwards I gave a second concert with similar results. I was a rich man. Then I started for Moscow, where material difficulties of a strange nature awaited me; third-rate musicians, fabulous choristers, with a public quite as sensitive and enthusiastic as that at St. Petersburg, and to crown all, a clear gain of eight thousand francs. Again I thought of my indifferent and *blasé* fellow countrymen, and again exclaimed: "Oh, dear Parisians!" Happily, this was not the last time. Often since, in London, have I felt drawn in like manner to the south-east.

A musician, in the eyes of many people, is a man who plays some instrument. It never occurs to them that there are such things as musical composers, still less that they give concerts in order to make their works known. Such persons doubtless imagine that music is to be had at the publisher's, like cakes at the confectioner's, and has only to be manufactured by the proper workman. I admit that in many cases there is some foundation for this eccentric idea; still, it is occasionally devoid of either foundation or justice. But there is nothing so droll as the amazement of certain people when you speak to them of a composer.

One day at Breslau I was nearly being insulted by a worthy paterfamilias, who wanted, right or wrong, to insist on my giving violin lessons to his son. In vain did I protest that I had never touched a bow in my life. He took everything I said as a joke, and would see nothing in it but a kind of heavy pleasantry.

"Sir, no doubt you are under the impression that I am the celebrated violinist Bériot. His name is certainly very like mine."

"Sir, I have seen your placard. You are giving a concert the day after to-morrow in the University rooms, and so——"

"Yes, sir, I am giving a concert, but I shall not play the violin myself."

"Then what will you do?"

"*I shall have the violin played*, and shall conduct the orchestra; but go to it yourself, and you will see."

My friend restrained his anger till the next day, and not till the concert was over and he had reflected on the subject, could he realise how a musician might figure in public without being a performer.

At Moscow, a blunder of the same description was nearly proving serious. The nobles' assembly-room was, as I have said, the only one suitable for my concert. Wishing to obtain the use of it, I had myself introduced to the grand marshal, a venerable-looking old man of about eighty, and proceeded to unfold to him the object of my visit. The first thing he asked me was:

"What instrument do you play?"

"No instrument whatever."

"In that case, how do you propose to give a concert?"

"To have my compositions performed, and to conduct the orchestra."

"Ha! that is an original idea. I never heard of a concert like that. I will willingly lend you our large hall, but you should be aware that artists who make use of it are obliged, in return, to perform at one of the private gatherings of the nobility."

"Has the Assembly an orchestra, then, for the performance of my music?"

"Certainly not."

"How, then, am I to have it done? I suppose I shall hardly be expected to spend three thousand francs in paying the musicians required to perform one of my symphonies at a private concert. That would be rather a high rent to pay for the room."

"Well, I regret to have to refuse you, but I cannot do otherwise."

And there I was, compelled to go away with this curious answer, and with the prospect of my long journey being rendered fruitless by this extraordinary and unforeseen obstacle. A French artist—M. Marcou by name—long settled at Moscow, was much amused at the account I gave of my disappointment; but he knew

the grand marshal, and proposed to accompany me to his house next day, and try a fresh attack.

Second visit — second refusal — useless explanations offered by my compatriot. The grand marshal shakes his hoary head, and remains inexorable. Fearing, however, that he did not speak French very well, and so might have failed to understand some term of my proposal, the marshal went off for his wife. Enter Madame la Maréchale, nearly as venerable-looking as her husband, but distinctly less benevolent. She looked at me, heard what I had to say, and cut short the discussion by saying, in very rapid and distinct French :

"We neither can nor will infringe the regulations of the Assembly. If we lend you the room, you will play an instrumental solo at our next *réunion*. If you will not play, the room cannot be lent."

"Good heavens, Madame la Maréchale ! I once played fairly well on the flageolet, flute, and guitar ; choose one of these instruments for my performance. But as it is about five-and-twenty years since I have touched either of them, I must warn you that I shall play very badly. Or, if you will be satisfied with the tambourine, I shall probably acquit myself better."

Fortunately for me, one of the superior officers had entered the *salon* during this scene ; he soon took in the difficulty, and drawing me aside, said :

"Say no more at present, M. Berlioz, or the discussion may become unpleasant to our good marshal. If you will be so kind as to send in your written demand to me to-morrow, everything shall be arranged. I will make it my business."

I took this advice, and, thanks to the good-natured colonel, they consented to a departure from the regula-

tions *for this once*. My concert was allowed to take place, and I was exempted from playing either the flute or the tambourine. It was a very lucky escape, for, sooner than recross the Volga without having given my concert, I had made up my mind to play the *galoubet*,[1] if necessary. None the less, however, was this extraordinary regulation—of which, unfortunately, I had heard nothing at St. Petersburg—the occasion of rather a large pecuniary loss to me; for though the concert was announced as the *only* one I should give, yet so loud were the demands of the audience for a repetition, that a second would probably have produced more than the first. But where was the room to be found?

When the assembly-room was granted me it was on the strict understanding that the exception to the rule was for once and once only. Besides, a composer . . . a man who could not play anything . . . a mere incapable! And yet how many individuals there are, more or less lacking in gifts, in the non-noble classes of society, whose highest aspirations are for this arduous and all but impracticable career!

If the persistence of the musical vocation in certain artistic families is explainable on the natural grounds of education and example, and of the ease with which children follow the path traced by their parents, and even by the natural disposition often transmitted from father to son, like the features of the face; how, on the other hand, is one to account for the extraordinary fancies that seem to drop from the skies into the heads of many children?

Not to mention the amateurs who insist on taking useless and expensive lessons to surmount a barbarous organisa-

[1] [The *galoubet* is a rustic flageolet.]

tion, with which neither the talent nor the patience of the most skilled masters can cope, nor yet visionaries who think that you can learn music by pure reasoning as you do mathematics, nor even those worthy fathers who propose to make their sons *colonels* or *great composers* at will, one meets very sad examples of musical madness among people whom one would fancy quite secure from that mental malady.

I will mention two which came under my own observation, and I fear were incurable cases. One of these was a Frenchman, the other a Russian.

I was alone one day in Paris, and hard at work, when the first of these knocked at the door of my study, and I bade him enter. A young man of about eighteen came forward, all breathless and agitated, partly from the idea which possessed him and partly from the pace at which he had come.

"Sir," said I, "pray take a seat."

"It is nothing . . . I am a little . . . I have come . . . (then, like a pistol-shot) sir, I have come into an inheritance."

"An inheritance! I congratulate you."

"Yes, I have come into an inheritance, and I want to ask you if you advise me to spend it in becoming a composer."

I opened my eyes. "Pray sit down, my dear sir. But good heavens! you must suppose me to be gifted with a marvellous intuition: prognostications founded even on rather important works are not always fulfilled. However, perhaps you have brought me one of your compositions."

"No, I have brought nothing, but you will see how well I shall work. I have such a taste for music!"

"You have no doubt written something already: a movement of a symphony perhaps, or an overture, or a cantata?"

"An overture? . . . N—no. Nor a cantata."

"Perhaps you have tried a quartet?"

"Ah, sir! a quartet!"

"Well, you need not turn up your nose at a quartet; of all styles of music it is perhaps the hardest to deal with, and the number of masters who have succeeded in it is curiously limited. But, however, not to attempt anything so high, have you not got a simple song to show me, or a waltz?"

(With an injured air.) "Oh! a song—no, no! I don't do things like that."

"Then you have done nothing?"

"No, but I shall work so hard."

"At any rate you have thoroughly studied harmony and counterpoint; you know the compass of voices and instruments?"

"Well, as to that . . . no, I don't know either harmony or counterpoint, or instrumentation, but you will see——"

"Pardon me, my dear sir, but you are eighteen or nineteen, and it is very late to begin such studies profitably. I suppose, however, that you can read music at sight and write it at dictation."

"Do I know the *solfeggio*? . . . Oh, dear me! . . . Well, no! . . . I don't even know my notes. I know nothing at all; but I have such a taste for music. I should so like to be a composer! If you would give me lessons, I would come to you twice a day, and would work all night."

After a tolerably long silence, during which I con-

trolled my desire to laugh, I gave my young composer a faithful but discouraging picture of the difficulties he would have to surmount before he could attain to the merest mediocrity, in other words, before he could write the vilest music. I set out the obstacles awaiting him even when he should have become a composer of a very high order. All to no purpose! He listened angrily and impatiently, and went off with the evident intention of finding another master to whom to offer his vocation and . . . his inheritance. Pray Heaven he may not have found him!

The other example is not absurd at all; quite the contrary. I had just given my concert at Moscow, when a letter was put into my hand in very good French, in which an unknown person requested me to give him an interview. I hastened to fix a day and hour. This time my friend had no inheritance; far from it. He was a tall young Russian, of at least twenty-two years of age, with a remarkable but slightly strange face, expressing himself in very select language, and full of that concentrated and fiery ardour that betrays the enthusiast. I felt keenly interested in him from the moment he opened his mouth.

"Sir," he said, "I have an immense passion for music. I have learnt it entirely unassisted, but very imperfectly, as you may imagine. Moscow does not offer much in the way of musical advantages, and I am not sufficiently well off to travel. My relations have tried in vain to deter me from this career. Now, however, one of our grand Moscow noblemen is willing to assist me. He has assured my father that if a musician in whom he can place implicit confidence should discover me to have a real aptitude for music, he will

undertake all the expenses of my complete education in Germany under the best masters. I have come accordingly to beg of you to examine my attempts, and favour me with your honest opinion of my capacities. In any case, I shall owe you an eternal debt of gratitude. But if your opinion is favourable, you will restore me to life, for I am dying, sir; the constraint they are putting upon me is killing me; I feel my wings and cannot unfold them. It is a torture which you ought to be able to enter into."

"Oh, certainly, my dear sir. I can imagine what you are suffering, and all my sympathy is yours. Make what use of me you please."

"A thousand thanks. I will bring the works for your inspection to-morrow." Whereupon he departed, his eyes gleaming in the ecstasy of his delight.

The next day he came back another man. His eyes were mournful and dimmed, and symptoms of discouragement were plainly visible on his pallid countenance.

"I have brought nothing," he said. "I spent the whole night in looking through my manuscripts. They are not fit for you to look at, and honestly not one of them is a fair representation of my capabilities. I am going to set to work to do something better for you."

"Unhappily," I answered, "I must go back to St. Petersburg the day after to-morrow."

"Never mind; I will send you my new work. Ah, sir, if you knew the fire which is consuming my soul, and the inspired voices calling me at times. I cannot remain in the town; however cold it may be I go and wander far away into the woods, and there, alone with nature, I hear a whole world of marvellous harmonies around me, my tears overwhelm me, I utter cries, and fall into ecstasies

that are like a foretaste of heaven. They look upon me as a madman, but I am not; I will prove to you that I am not."

I renewed my assurances of the interest the young enthusiast awakened in me, and my desire to be useful to him.

"Good heavens!" I said to myself after he had left me, "are not these the signs of an exceptional organisation? . . . Perhaps he is a man of genius! . . . It would be a crime not to help him. Assuredly I will devote myself heart and soul to him if necessary, if he will only give me the smallest opportunity."

Alas! I waited at St. Petersburg for several weeks in vain, and all I received at last was a letter in which the young Russian excused himself afresh for not sending me any music. But to his despair, and notwithstanding all his efforts, he could not, he wrote, get any inspiration.

What did it mean, that frigid and poor appreciation of his own works? . . . that avowed incapacity on the part of a man who at other times fancied himself all-powerful and inspired? What is the ideal to which he seeks to attain? What has he as yet done to approach it? What is there in that troubled spirit? . . . God knows. But, also, what is there in common between such ardent aspirations towards music more or less explained and justified by time, and the mean calculation and prosaic ambition that induce so many lads to enter a Conservatoire and embrace the musical profession, as one would learn the trade of a tailor or shoemaker? . . . Melomaniacs, at any rate, even when akin to madmen, injure no one, and their madness, when not laughable, is touching and poetical; whereas, artisan-musicians are detrimental both to art and artists, give rise

to tedious and vexatious blunders, and are capable of corrupting the taste of a whole nation by their numbers, no less than by their low instincts. The most musical nation is not that which can show the greatest number of mediocre musicians, but rather that which has given birth to great masters, and in which the feeling for musical beauty has been most cultivated.

In spite of all the curious and interesting architectural features of the semi-Asiatic town of Moscow, I studied it but slightly during my three weeks' stay. The preparations for my concert absorbed me entirely. Thanks, moreover, to the thaw then raging in all its attractiveness, it was really hardly visitable. The streets presented nothing but lakes of water and melting snow, through which the sledges could scarcely penetrate. I saw nothing but the exterior even of the Kremlin. I confined myself to counting the beads of the necklace of cannon that surround it—sad relics of our perishing army. They are of all sorts and descriptions, and belong to all nations. Inscriptions in the *French language* (horrible irony) pointed out the regiments to which the various pieces in this mournful collection had belonged. One bears a most peculiar wound; it has the print of a Russian bullet on its lip, which entered the gun after having struck it on the mouth, and ripped up the interior. If the piece were loaded at the moment, I leave you to imagine the amazement of the cartridge it contained, on receiving so rude a blow. . . . It must have fancied that the Emperor had resumed his old task of artilleryman, and was loading it in person.

At Moscow I heard a performance of Glinka's opera, *La Vie pour le Czar*. The immense theatre was empty (is it ever full?), and the scenery was constantly repre-

senting snow-covered pine-forests and steppes, and men all white with snow. I still shiver when I think of it. There are many graceful and highly original airs in the work, but I could hardly make them out, the performance was so imperfect. The studies in this theatre appeared to be carried on in a very curious manner, notwithstanding the zeal and musical erudition of M. Verstowski, the director. I noticed this when rehearsing the choruses of the two first acts of *Faust*.

When I entered the practising-room, I found some sixty men and women standing about in silent groups, but without either master or accompanyist, or even a piano.

"Where is the piano," said I, "and the pianist?"

"They never have one here to teach the choruses," was the reply. "We study without an accompaniment."

"The deuce you do! What musicians you must be! Your chorus must certainly be the best readers in the world."

"Oh, no; certainly not. But such is the custom, and we do as we can."

"You are joking! Pray have the goodness to send for a piano; I must be excused for being so troublesome, but I am a foreigner. We shall soon find an accompanyist, and at a pinch I can even strike a few chords myself, which will be better than nothing."

The piano arrived, to the great surprise of the singers. M. Genista, a very good German teacher, who happened to be present, was kind enough to accompany, and we succeeded in reading the *Faust* choruses, which were learnt after a fashion in a few more meetings. Russians must be gifted in a way that other nations do not dream of, if chorus singers can really succeed in learning whole operas in this way. They also sang

in German, like their compeers at St. Petersburg. But the parts of Faust and Mephistopheles, kindly undertaken by Messrs. Léonoff and Slavik (two Russians), were sung in—*northern* French! It was a step in advance: the two heroes of the drama kept up their dialogue in the same language, at any rate. M. Grassi, a Sardinian violinist settled in Russia, and M. Marcou, already mentioned, were of great use to me in organising my concert; and Max Bohrer, who arrived in Moscow at the same time as myself, with great cordiality offered to help in the orchestra.

I have a grudge against the censorship for their treatment of a couplet from the students' Latin song in *Faust*:

> Nobis subridente lunâ,
> Per urbem quærentes puellas eamus,
> Ut eras fortunati Cæsares dicamus:
> Veni, vidi, vici.[1]

The censor refused to authorise the printing of so scandalous a song. In vain did I assure him that the libretto had undergone censorship at St. Petersburg, and presented him with a copy stamped with the official approbation; he only answered: "The censor at St. Petersburg can do as he pleases, but I do not feel bound to

[1] A Dresden critic, in 1854, protested solemnly against this song, maintaining that German students were well-mannered youths, incapable of running after *grisettes* by moonlight. This same innocent fellow accused me in the same article of *vilifying Mephistopheles* by making him cheat Faust. "The German Mephistopheles was honest," he said, "and carried out every clause of the treaty signed by Faust, whereas in M. Berlioz's work, he makes Faust believe that he is bringing him to Margaret's prison, when he is really conducting him to the abyss. It is an insult." Yes, was it not disgraceful on my part? I am convicted of having slandered the spirit of evil and falsehood, of being worse than a demon, of not being so good as the devil. This charming criticism was for long the delight of Dresden, and I believe even still amuses its inhabitants.

imitate him. The passage in question is immoral, and must be suppressed." And so it was . . . *in the libretto.* I was certainly not going to mutilate my score for mere prudery's sake. The prohibited verse was *sung* at the concert, though in such a way as to be unintelligible. And that is why the population of Moscow has remained the most moral on the face of the earth.

Among the distinguished amateurs at Moscow I must not omit to name M. Graziani, eldest son of one of our best old Italian opera singers in Paris.

There is a splendid institution for young ladies, under the immediate patronage of the Empress, where the pupils receive solid and even severe musical instruction as a supplement to their general education. Three of the best pianists performed an old triple concerto for the harpsichord in D minor[1] by X——, which it must be admitted is decidedly severe. And yet their master, M. Reinhard, is an amiable man and an able musician, and I am sure that he did not intend to annoy me when he chose that piece for performance.

There was also a delightful little prodigy at Moscow, the son of the Princess Olga Dolgorouki, aged ten, who really frightened me by the intelligent passion with which he sang dramatic scenes from the great masters, and songs of his own composition.

Although overwhelmed with civilities by several of the Moscow families, I was obliged to return immediately to St. Petersburg, where I was expected to superintend the rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet*, of which M. Guédéonoff had promised me a splendid performance at the great theatre.

[1] [This must be the well-known work by Sebastian Bach, which has been played in London by Mendelssohn, Moscheles, and Thalberg, and many others, and is always enjoyed.]

CHAPTER LXXII.

Return to St. Petersburg — *Romeo and Juliet* — Romeo in his cabriolet — Ernst — His talent — Retrospective action of Music.

On reaching the banks of the Volga, I witnessed for the first time the breaking up of a Russian river by the thaw. I had to wait five hours on the left bank until the frozen mass had somewhat dispersed; and when at last I crossed in a boat, which was purposely swayed from right to left and from left to right to facilitate its passage through the blocks, the slow but irresistible movement of the icebergs, the mysterious crackling sound produced by their floating, the excessive weight of the boat with its load of luggage, the manifest anxiety and loud cries of our conductors, did not, I confess, particularly delight me, and I breathed a real sigh of pleasure when I landed safely on the opposite bank.

The sun was already shining pretty brightly, but in spite of the feebleness of its rays, I frequently saw children playing and rolling about in the snow heaps, with nothing on but their shirts, just as ours would do in summer on the hay. The Russians must have hell-fire in their bodies.

Immediately on my arrival, I began the choral rehearsals of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Grand Theatre. When M. Guédéonoff had approved the idea of getting up that

work, I asked his excellency how many rehearsals he would allow me.

"As many as you please. Let them rehearse every day, and when you tell me it is all right we will announce the concert, but not before."

"Splendid," said I; "we will take great pains and it shall go well."

In fact, as I have already said, that symphony cannot even be decently performed unless it is studied regularly and connectedly, like an opera to be sung by heart. And that is why it has seldom been performed with such confidence, spirit, and grandeur as at St. Petersburg.

I had a colossal chorus of men, and for the sopranos and contraltos, sixty young women with fresh sonorous voices, and fairly good musicians taken from the choirs of the Italian Opera, the German Opera, and the theatrical school, a kind of Conservatoire, where the pupils are taught music, French, and stage business. The *Capulets* rehearsed in one room, the *Montagues* in another, and the prologue was studied in a third. When, at last, each singer knew his part almost by heart, I united the three choirs, and the general effect of the whole body in the grand *finale* was perfectly satisfactory. Moreover, I had Versing for the part of Father Laurence, Madame Walcker for the contralto in the prologue, and Holland (a clever actor, who delivered the recitative with rare intelligence) for the *scherzo*. It was imperially organised; the performance was bound to be, and in fact was, a marvellous one; I recall it as one of the greatest delights of my life. Besides, I was in such a good mood that day that I was lucky enough not to make a single mistake in conducting, which at that time seldom happened. The great theatre was full; uniforms, epaulettes, helmets, diamonds, glittered and sparkled on all

sides. I do not know how often I was called back. But I confess I did not pay much attention to the public; and such was the impression made on me by my setting of that divine Shakespearian poem, that after the *finale* I fled for refuge into one of the side rooms, where Ernst found me a few moments later in floods of tears. "Ah, your nerves are unstrung!" he said; "I know well what that is." And he supported my head and let me cry like a hysterical girl for a quarter of an hour. Can you imagine a respectable tradesman of the Rue St. Denis, or the manager of the Opéra (in Paris, of course), witnessing such a crisis. Try to imagine what they would understand of the summer tempest in the artist's heart, its torrents and electric fires, vague memories of youth, first love, and Italian skies, blooming afresh beneath the burning rays of Shakespeare's genius; the apparition of Juliet, ever dreamt of, ever sought for, and never possessed; the revelation of the infinite in love and sorrow; my joy at having awakened some distant echoes of the voices of that heaven of poetry . . . then measure the roundness of their eyes and their gaping mouths . . . if you can! The first would say, "That gentleman must be ill, I will send him a glass of *eau sucrée;*" and the second, "He is giving himself airs. I will have him put in the *Charivari.*"

All said and done, however, I believe that notwithstanding its warm reception, the symphony slightly wearied the public by its length, and especially by the solemnity of the final scenes, and that they liked it less than *Faust.*

The cashier of the theatre was well pleased with the result of the first concert, but he confided to me that he had doubts as to the second, unless I gave at least two

scenes from *Faust* besides *Romeo;* and I had to take his advice.

Among the audience on the second occasion, I heard of a lady who was an *habituée* of the Italian Opera, and consented to be bored at this performance with the most exemplary patience. She could not endure to be supposed incapable of liking such music. On leaving her box, she said in a tone of great elation at having stayed to the end, "It is certainly a very serious work, but quite intelligible. In that grand effect in the introduction, I recognised at once that *Romeo was arriving in his cabriolet*" ! ! !

The overture to the *Carnaval Romain* was the [1]least successful of all my works at St. Petersburg. It passed almost unnoticed on the evening of my first concert, and Count Michel Wielhorski (an excellent musician) having confessed that he did not understand it in the least, I took care not to give it again. A Viennese would hardly credit this, but scores have their destiny, like books and dramas, roses and thistles.

At a concert in the Grand Theatre, for Versing's benefit, I also conducted my *Symphonie Fantastique;* and on this occasion Damcke, composer, pianist, conductor, and critic, had the amazing good-nature to come and play the two deep notes (C, G), representing the funeral knell in the *finale*, as if he had been any ordinary kettle-drummer.

The overture to the *Carnaval Romain* was for long the most popular of all my compositions in Austria, and was played everywhere. I recollect that while I was at Vienna, it gave rise to various notable incidents. Haslinger, the publisher, gave a musical soirée, at which, among other things, this overture was to be performed, arranged for two

[1] [Curious! This overture is usually considered the most tuneful and intelligible of Berlioz's instrumental works.]

pianos and a physharmonica. When its turn arrived, I happened to be near a door opening into the room where the five performers were seated. They took the first *allegro* far too slow; the *andante* went fairly well, but when they resumed the *allegro* at a still more dragging pace than before, the blood rushed to my head, I grew scarlet, and, unable to keep my temper, cried out: "It is not the Carnival, it is Good Friday that you are playing!"

I leave you to imagine the mirth excited among the audience by this exclamation. It was impossible to restore silence, and the overture was finished amid the laughter and noise of the assembly, but still quite slowly, and apparently without my five interpreters having been in the least disturbed.

Some days afterwards, Dreyschock was giving a concert in the concert-room of the Conservatoire, and begged me to conduct the same overture, as a part of his programme. "I want to make you forget Good Friday at Haslinger's," said he. He had engaged all the orchestra of the Kärntnerthor Theatre. Just as the rehearsal was beginning, one of the first violins, who spoke French, whispered: "You will see the difference between us and those little wretches at the Wien Theatre" (where I used to give my concerts). Certainly he was not wrong. Never was the work performed with such fire, precision, spirit, and well-ordered turbulence. And what sonority! What harmonious *harmony!* That apparent pleonasm can alone convey my meaning. In fact it *exploded* like a mass of fireworks, and was encored with a noise of feet and hands never heard except at Vienna. Dreyschock, whose own personal success was obscured by this tempestuous enthusiasm, tore his gloves in a fury and said

with a look of rage, as if I had done him a real injury: "Catch me playing *overtures* again at my concerts!" . . . However, his comic ill-temper did not last very long, or prevent him from being most cordial to me at Prague some weeks later.

I mentioned Ernst just now. He arrived at St. Petersburg the same day as myself, and we met by chance in Russia, as we had already met at Brussels, Vienna, and Paris, and as we have since met in other parts of Europe, where the various incidents or accidents of our artistic life seem to have strengthened the bonds of sympathy already established between us. I have the warmest and most affectionate admiration for him. He has such a good heart, at once a good friend and a great artist! Ernst has been compared to Chopin. In certain respects there is ground for the comparison, but in others, and those the most important, there is none whatever. From a purely musical point of view they differ essentially. Chopin could ill endure the restraint of time, and to my mind pushed his rhythmical independence much too far. Ernst, though taking such legitimate and reasonable liberties with the time as passionate expression demands, remains a periodic musician, keeping strict time, with no change of pace in the midst of his most venturesome caprices. Chopin *could* not play in strict time. Ernst can forsake it for a moment, but only to make its power felt the more forcibly when he returns to it. He must be heard in Beethoven's quartets to be appreciated in this respect.

In Chopin's compositions, all the interest is centred on the piano; the orchestra in his concertos is nothing but a cold and almost useless accompaniment. Ernst's works are especially distinguished by the contrary characteristics.

His concerted pieces written for the violin manifestly combine qualities formerly supposed to be incompatible —namely, a brilliant mechanism and a sustained symphonic interest. To make the solo instrument predominate, without suppressing the orchestra, was the problem which Beethoven was the first to solve successfully.[1] And, perhaps, even Beethoven made the orchestra predominate, to the detriment of the solo; whereas the balance seems to me evenly kept in the system adopted by Ernst, Vieuxtemps, Liszt, and some others. On this point I insist.

Ernst, who is the most charming humorist of my acquaintance, a great musician as well as a great player, is a thorough artist whose expressive faculties take the lead, but who is in no way deficient in the vital qualities of musical art properly so called. He is gifted with that rare organisation which permits the artist to conceive powerfully, and to carry out his conception without hesitation. In his zeal for progress, he makes use of all the resources of art. He writes beautiful poems on the violin in musical language, of which he is complete master. Chopin was purely the virtuoso of elegant drawing-rooms and intimate gatherings. To Ernst, a theatre, a large room, and a huge audience are always welcome; and, like Liszt, he never seems so powerful as when he has two thousand listeners to subdue. His concerts at the theatre in St. Petersburg would have proved this to me, had I not been convinced of it already. It was marvellous to hear him in his variations on the *Carnaval de Venise*, written after those of Paganini, though not in imitation of them. In this tasteful

[1] [Mozart, in his Pianoforte Concertos, may perhaps be allowed to have done a little in the same direction.]

fantasia, all the caprices of a rich invention are mingled in so skilful and rapid a manner with the eccentricities of a tremendous mechanism, that at last one loses the sense of surprise, and accepts the monotonous accompaniment of the air just as though the most variously coloured cascades of melody were not bounding forth from the solo violin in the most diverting and unforeseen manner. In this curious combination of power and almost careless facility, Ernst is simply dazzling and fascinating. He plays with diamonds as with counters. If Crespel, the whimsical owner of the Cremona violin, could have witnessed these incredible feats, the little reason the poor man had left would have speedily disappeared altogether, and he would have suffered less from the death of Antonia.

Often as I have heard Ernst in these variations, they have always the most curious effect on me. The moment the theme appears beneath that magic bow, it is again midnight. I am once more at St. Petersburg in a huge hall, as bright as day; again I experience that strange sweet languor that one feels at the end of a splendid musical soirée; smiles and murmurs of enthusiasm fill the air; I fall into a romantic melancholy which I cannot overcome, nay, which it would be painful to resist. . . .

Music is the sole art that has this retrospective power; no other, not even that of Shakespeare, can thus idealise the past. For music alone speaks at once to the imagination, the mind, the heart, and the *senses;* and it is the reaction of the senses on the mind and heart, and *vice versâ*, that produces the impressions felt by those who are gifted with the necessary organisation, but of which *others* (the barbarians) can know nothing.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

My Return—Riga—Berlin—Performance of *Faust*—A Dinner at Sans Souci—The King of Prussia.

Lent was over; there was no longer anything to keep me at St. Petersburg, and I made up my mind, though not without much regret, to leave that brilliant capital and its charming hospitality. On my way through Riga, the strange idea occurred to me of giving a concert there. The receipts barely covered the expenses, but it procured me the acquaintance of Schrameck, the post-master, and several other distinguished artists and amateurs. The former did not give much support to my plan for a concert. "Our little town is not like St. Petersburg," said he. "We are all commercial men; everyone is occupied just now with selling corn; you won't have more than a hundred ladies at the outside, and not a single man." He was mistaken. I had a hundred and thirty-two ladies and seven men. I think I had even three roubles (about twelve francs) profit. The post-master also maintained that I had not the proper exterior for my profession. "You don't seem at all bad, sir," he said, "and from your *feuilletons* I should have expected to find you quite another sort of person, for you write with a dagger instead of a pen." At any rate, the point of my

dagger is not poisoned, and the "precious villains"[1] whom I am so readily supposed to have murdered are in excellent health. Moreover, I had an unexpected stroke of good luck at Riga. Baumeister, the excellent German actor, was playing, and I saw him in . . . *Hamlet*.

I received a letter from Count de Rödern at Moscow, telling me of the King of Prussia's desire to hear my legend of *Faust*, and advising me to stop at Berlin on my way home for the purpose. The King offered me the Opera theatre and all its resources, and guaranteed me half of the gross receipts. I was much touched by this royal kindness, and remained ten days at Berlin to get up the performance. As far as the orchestra and choir were concerned it was an admirable one, but very feeble in other respects. The tenor who had undertaken the part of Faust, and the soprano who was overwhelmed by that of Marguerite, both did me the greatest injury. The ballad of the King of Thule (which till then had been always applauded) was hissed, but whether these manifestations were addressed to the author or to the singer, or to both, I cannot tell; the latter idea is the most probable. The pit was filled with ill-natured people, indignant, as I heard, that a Frenchman should have had the insolence to set to music a paraphrase of the national *chef d'œuvre*, and also with partisans of Prince Radzivill, who, with the help of various musicians,[2] had set some of Goethe's scenes to music.

Never have I seen anything so outrageously ferocious as the intolerance of certain idolaters of the German

[1] Othello's expression in speaking of Iago.

[2] [This is a gratuitous sneer at a composer who, though an amateur, appears to have been a very competent musician.]

nationality. . . . And this time I had a section of the Opera orchestra against me, whose good graces I had forfeited some years before by my letters on Berlin.[1] And yet these letters, as the reader may judge,[2] assuredly contain nothing to wound the Berlin instrumentalists. On the contrary, I have praised them in every way, and only criticise certain minor details in their orchestra and that with great reserve. I call the orchestra *magnificent;* I pronounce it gifted with *precision*, *unity*, *force*, and *delicacy;* but, and herein consists my crime, I compare them with the artists of Paris, and pronounce (now shudder with indignation) that our flutists are superior to theirs! These simple words made the Berlin flutist furious, and he managed to imbue many of his colleagues with his own feeling, by representing that I had been very insulting to the Berlin orchestra. A fresh proof of the danger one runs in writing about players, and of being within reach of their self-love after giving it the slightest wound! In criticising a singer, one does not necessarily expose oneself to the aversion of his competitors; on the contrary, they are more likely to think you not sufficiently severe on him. But the member of a renowned orchestra always asserts, that in criticising him you *insult* the whole body to which he belongs, and sometimes succeeds in making his comrades believe his nonsense.

In Paris, during the rehearsals of *Benvenuto Cellini*, it once happened that I had to point out a mistake in an important passage to the second horn (M. Meyfred, a

[1] Translated into German by M. Gathy, and published at Hamburg.

[2] See vol. ii., letters vii., viii., ix.

man of sense). At this observation, which was made as calmly and politely as possible, M. Meyfred rose angrily and exclaimed: "I am doing just what is marked! Why should you *mistrust* the *orchestra* in this way?" To which I replied still more calmly: "In the first place, my dear M. Meyfred, it is not exactly a question of the orchestra, but of you alone. In the next place, I do not *mistrust* you, for mistrust implies doubt, and I am perfectly *certain* that you are making a mistake."

But to return to the Berlin orchestra. I soon discovered its ill-will towards me during the rehearsals of *Faust*. The icy greeting I received on entrance, the hostile silence after the best parts of the score, the sour glances darted at me, especially by the flutes, and the revelations of certain friendly musicians, left no doubt on my mind. My friends, intimidated by the hostility of their comrades, dared not applaud me, and it was in an undertone that one of them, who spoke a little French, contrived to slip these words into my ear as he passed me on the stage: "Monsieur, la *mousik* . . . elle est souperbe!" . . .

The orchestral performance, however, like that of the chorus, was irreproachable. Boeticher sang the part of Mephistopheles like a good musician and true artist. The public endeavoured to encore the *Danse des Sylphes*, but I was in a bad temper, and would not obey their wish.

The Crown Princess of Prussia, who had twice come at eight o'clock in the morning to hear my rehearsals in the cold dark concert-room, made me all sorts of pretty speeches. The King sent me the Cross of the Red Eagle through Meyerbeer, and invited me to dinner at his château of Sans Souci two days later; and Relstab, the great critic, so long the bitter enemy of Meyerbeer and

Spontini, after various verbal professions of friendship and regard, made *mincemeat* of me in the *Gazette d'État.* These were real triumphs, the last, to my thinking, not the least. The dinner at Sans Souci was delightful. M. von Humboldt, Count Mathieu Wielhorski, and the Crown Princess of Prussia were among the guests. After dessert, we took our coffee in the garden. The King walked about cup in hand, and seeing me on the steps of one of the pavilions, called out:

"Berlioz, come here and tell me something about my sister and your travels in Russia."

I know not what nonsense I talked to my august host, but he took it all in the highest good-humour.

"Did you learn any Russian?" he asked me.

"Yes, Sire, I can say, 'Na prava, na leva' (to the right, to the left) sufficiently to guide a sledge-driver. I can also say 'dourack' when the driver loses his way."

"And what does 'dourack' mean?"

"It means 'stupid fool,' Sire!"

"Ha, ha! Stupid fool, Sire! stupid fool, Sire! that's good!"

And the King burst into such fits of laughter that he upset nearly all the contents of his cup. This merriment, in which I unceremoniously joined, made me an important personage on the spot. Several courtiers, officers, gentlemen, and chamberlains remarked it from the pavilion, and immediately began to think of being on good terms with the man who had made the King laugh so heartily, and who himself laughed in such a familiar manner. Accordingly, on my return to the pavilion I found myself surrounded by various noblemen, all perfect strangers to me, who made me the most profound salutations, at the same time modestly mentioning their

names. I really could not understand at first my sudden reputation at the Prussian Court, but at last I remembered the scene in the first act of the *Huguenots*, where Raoul, after the receipt of Queen Margaret's letter, is surrounded by people singing in canon on every note of the scale, "*Vous savez si je suis un ami sûr et tendre!*" I was taken for an influential favourite of the King! What queer people courtiers are!

Without being either a favourite or influential, I am at any rate profoundly grateful for all the King of Prussia's kindness, and it was with no intention of flattering him that I said, in the course of a few moments' serious conversation that day:

"You are the real king of artists."

"How so? What have I done for them?"

"To speak of musical artists alone, you have done much for them, Sire. You have rewarded Spontini and Meyerbeer regally, and overwhelmed them with honours. You have had their works splendidly performed. You have had Gluck's masterpieces revived on a scale of magnificence unknown out of Berlin. You have had the *Antigone* of Sophocles represented, and commissioned Mendelssohn to write choruses in honour of that resurrection from the antique. You also engaged him to set Shakespeare's fascinating *Midsummer Night's Dream* to music. Moreover, the direct interest you take in all these noble artistic efforts acts as an incentive to the composers, and a ceaseless encouragement to their labours; and the support thus given to the efforts of artists is the more valuable because it is the only one of the sort they obtain in Europe."

"Well, well; perhaps there is some truth in what you say, but you must not talk so much about it."

Certainly it was true. Things are slightly changed now. The King of Prussia is no longer the only sovereign in Europe interested in music. There are two others besides, the young King of Hanover and the Grand-duke of Weimar. Three in all.

H. B.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Roqueplan and Duponchel, Directors of the Opéra—Their gratitude—*La Nonne Sanglante*—London—Jullien, Manager of Drury Lane—Scribe—The priest must live by the altar.

On my return to France I spent a few days with my family, from whom I had so long been separated, and introduced to my father his hitherto unknown grandson. Poor Louis! how he enjoyed the tender welcome of his grandparents and their old servants, and what pleasure he had in running about the fields with me, with his little gun in his hand! In a letter I received from him two days ago, dated from the Aland Islands, he speaks of that fortnight at the Côte St. André as the happiest in his whole life. . . . And now he is a sailor in the Anglo-French fleet, blocking the Russian ports on the Baltic, and constantly expecting an action.

The notion of it upsets both heart and head. Happy they who love no one! And yet he chose this career himself. Could I oppose him? . . . For after all, it is a grand and noble profession. And who could have foreseen this war! . . . Those terrible and innumerable instruments of destruction! God grant he may escape safe and sound! . . . Those enormous pieces of cannon he is obliged to serve! those red-hot balls, those

Congreve rockets! that hail of grape-shot! the firing! the leaks! the steam explosions! . . . It drives me mad to think of them! . . . I can write no more!

Two days later.—I am always thinking of it. Let us talk of something else. A modern naval battle . . . my story goes so slowly. It is so tiresome to write, and no doubt also to read. What use is it all? Let us abridge facts as much as possible, without note or comment. Poor dear child!

After that excursion into Dauphiny I returned to Paris. They are bombarding . . . Bomarsund . . . perhaps he is in the very midst of the firing at this moment. . . .

M. Léon Pillet had just given up the directorship of the Opéra. M. Nestor Roqueplan and that eternal Duponchel had associated themselves together and united all their efforts to obtain the post. They called on me.

"You know," they said, "that M. Pillet cannot remain at the Opéra any longer. We have a chance of getting it" (Duponchel might have said of getting it again), "but the Minister of the Interior is not favourably disposed towards us, and you are the only person who might be able to make him change his mind by interesting the director of the *Journal des Débats*. Would you mind asking M. Armand Bertin to make an application to the Minister? If we are nominated, we shall offer you the chief management of the music at the Opéra, and the post of conductor besides."

"Pardon me, but that place is already occupied by M. Girard, one of my oldest friends, and not for any consideration would I be the means of his losing it."

"Very well, two conductors are wanted at the Opéra. We do not wish to keep the second, who is good for nothing, and so we will have the duties of conductor

divided evenly between you and M. Girard. Leave it to us; it shall all be arranged to your satisfaction."

Taken in by these fine speeches, I went to M. Bertin. After some hesitation, occasioned by his want of confidence in the applicants, he consented to speak for them to the Minister. They were nominated.

From the day of their installation I began to be insulted in all sorts of ways at the Opéra. Roqueplan made appointments with me and never kept them. Duponchel followed his example. For two hours they made me dance attendance; and when, at last, one of the pair arrived, he would regret the absence of his partner, and declare himself unable to talk business without him. I very soon understood the method of these gentlemen. Such proceedings filled me with indignation, but I restrained myself, being bent on seeing how far they would push their *candour*. I determined to persist till I had got them into a fix, and I succeeded. After I know not how many comings and goings and futile errands, it had to end in our all meeting together, and then the recantation began very distinctly: "*They did not exactly see their way to creating a post for me at the Opéra. They might possibly be able to give me the management of the chorus, but I did not play the piano, and that was essential for rehearsals. Girard would not hear of recognising anyone as equal to himself in the direction of the orchestra. 'A throne,' said he, 'cannot be divided'*" (*Roi d'Yvetot!*), *etc. etc.* In short, they were in a difficulty. But that was the conclusion of the matter.

At the request of M. Léon Pillet, I had long since begun a grand opera, in five acts, entitled *La Nonne Sanglante*, the book of which had been sketched by Scribe, and the contract signed between M. Pillet, Scribe,

and myself. Will it be believed that in the middle of our conversation Roqueplan had the audacity to throw these words in my face :

"You have an opera libretto by Scribe?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do you propose to do with it?"

"By Jove, what is usually done with opera librettos?"

"But you are aware that artists employed in our theatre are prohibited by ministerial regulations from having their works represented there; and as you are going to occupy a place in it, you will not be able to write operas."

"Oh, you may be sure I don't intend to write a dozen. If I can produce two good ones in my life I shall esteem myself very lucky."

"No matter, it won't be possible for you to have even one performed. Your *Nun* will be lost. *You ought to give it to us, and we will have it set to music by somebody else.*"

I still restrained myself, and in a choking voice answered : "Take it!"

From that moment the conversation became more and more useless and muddled. I had found out my men. My suspicions were evidently well founded. They were aiming at getting rid of me, and not only had they no intention of keeping any of their promises, but, looking on me as an absurd and dangerous composer, they were firmly resolved not to allow anything of my composition to be played at the Opéra, and even to withdraw a work already begun, which I had offered to the last manager.

Duponchel did not say a word, being probably put out of countenance by the impudence of his associate. He

also had no opinion of my value, but he seemed to feel that managers who owed me their place might at any rate conceal their contempt of me, if they were not exactly obliged to make a willing sacrifice by getting up my work when its success seemed so problematical.

It may well be believed that it was not the opinion of these gentlemen on my compositions that made me so indignant. I had often heard them express their sovereign contempt for Beethoven, Mozart, Gluck, and all the great musical divinities; I should rather have been ashamed if I had met with the slightest appearance of sympathy from them. But such colossal ingratitude exceeded anything I had hitherto encountered in that line. Accordingly, the day after this conversation, in which, though nothing was settled, I had learnt what I wished to know—the full extent of the gratitude of two men under obligations to me—I accepted the proposal I had by chance received at that time of directing the orchestra of the great English Opera in London. I wrote immediately to Duponchel and Roqueplan, to acquaint them with my determination, released them from all their engagements, and wished them all sorts of prosperity. Then these gentlemen, in order to exculpate themselves in the eyes of those who knew what I had done for them, and to throw on me the odium of their conduct, went about everywhere saying that I had insisted on having the first conductorship and on Girard's dismissal; a double calumny, because, from the very beginning, I had declared that I would accept nothing that could injure Girard. Girard, of course, believed the falsehood. I took offence at his credulity, and from that day to this we have not been on good terms—which, I confess, does not much trouble me.

For the rest, I am bound to say that I got very much what I deserved. I was perfectly acquainted with the musical morality of my two friends; with regard to music, they are a couple of Chinese, while all the time they believe themselves to be gifted both with taste and judgment. Consequently, they combine the most absolute self-confidence with the most complete ignorance and profoundest barbarism. Instead, therefore, of smoothing their way to the Opéra, I ought to have hampered them as much as possible.

But their promise of the musical direction of the Opéra dazzled me. All the fine things that might be done with such an instrument, when one knows how to use it, and when one's sole aim is the grandeur and progress of art, rushed into my mind. "They," said I to myself, "will administer the finances, they will manage the ballet and the scenery, etc., and as for the Opéra, properly so called, I shall be the real Director!" And I fell into their net.

I had been some weeks in London when it once more occurred to me to put my two Directors of the *Nonne Sanglante* into a fix. I had certainly told Roqueplan to "take it," but it was rather in the tone of Leonidas' reply to Xerxes' order to give up his arms: "Come and take them." The point in question was the regulation forbidding a composer holding any employment at the Opéra to write anything for that theatre. True, M. Dietsch, the director of the chorus, had had his *Vaisseau Fantôme* played;[1] M. Benoist, the accompanyist, had had his *Apparition* performed; while Halévy's *Juive*, *Drapier*,

[1] The libretto of this work, written by Richard Wagner, had been purchased from him for twenty pounds and composed by Dietsch, who inspired the manager with much more confidence than Wagner.

and *Guido et Genevra* were all played at the very time that he was director of singing at the Opéra! Still, Roqueplan had a ghost of a pretext for refusing me a performance of my *Nonne Sanglante*. But being now settled in London, and out of reach of a regulation which had ceased to apply to me, I wrote to Scribe, begging him to get a final decision. "If they consent," I said, "to maintain the agreement we signed with M. Pillet, pray ask them to let me have the necessary time to finish my score. The direction of the orchestra at Drury Lane leaves me no time for composing, and you yourself have not finished the libretto. I must have plenty of leisure for such a work, and cannot engage to complete it under three years. If they will not allow us this latitude, or if they refuse to sanction our agreement, which is more than probable, then I will abuse your patience no longer, but will ask you to take back the poem, and dispose of it as you please."

To which Scribe, after having seen the Directors, replied that, being well aware that we were not nearly ready, they accepted the *Nonne* on condition that they might set to work at it immediately, and he finished his letter thus:

"So I think the chances in our favour are not great, and since you are kind and honourable enough to allow me to dispose of the old poem that has been so long in hand, I don't mind telling you frankly that I take you at your word, and shall try to get rid of it, either at the Théâtre National that has just been opened, or elsewhere."

And so the matter ended. Scribe took back his poem, and, I am told, offered it to Halévy, Verdi, and Grisar, who all had the delicacy to decline his offer, knowing the state of the case, and considering Scribe's treatment of

me to have been rather unhandsome. M. Gounod finally accepted it, and his score will soon be performed.[1]

I had written but two acts of it. At the head of what I consider as my best compositions I should put the grand duet containing the legend of the Bleeding Nun, and the *finale* which follows it. That duet and two airs are fully scored, the *finale* is not. It will probably never be known.[2]

When I saw Scribe on my return to Paris, he seemed slightly confused at having accepted my offer and taken back his poem. "But, as you know," said he, "Il faut que le prêtre vive de l'autel."[3] Poor fellow! he could not in fact have waited; he has only some two or three hundred thousand francs per annum, a house in town, three country houses, etc.

Liszt made a capital pun when I repeated Scribe's speech to him. "Yes," said he, "by his *hotel*"—comparing Scribe to an innkeeper.

I shall not enter into details as to my first stay in England, for they are simply interminable. Besides, it is always the same thing over and over again. I was engaged by Jullien, the celebrated director of the promenade concerts, to conduct the orchestra of a Grand English Opera, which he had the wild ambition of establishing at Drury Lane Theatre. Jullien, in his incontestable and uncontested character of madman, had engaged a charming orchestra, a first-rate chorus, a very

[1] It has been only a quarter successful. As for the poem, which was at last finished by Scribe and Germain Delavigne, it is so tame and monotonous that I ought to think myself fortunate not to have kept it. [*La Nonne Sanglante* was produced at the Opéra October 18th, 1854.]

[2] It has all been destroyed since, with the exception of the two airs.

[3] [The priest must live by the altar.]

fair set of singers; he had forgotten nothing but the *répertoire*. The sole work he had in view was an opera he had ordered from Balfe, called *The Maid of Honour*, and he proposed to open his series with an English translation of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. While they were waiting for the *mise en scène* of Balfe's opera, he would have had to take ten thousand francs (four hundred pounds) a night, barely to cover the expenses of *Lucia*.

The result was inevitable; the receipts from *Lucia* never came near ten thousand francs. Balfe's opera was only a moderate success, and in a very short time Jullien was ruined. I never touched a penny beyond my first month's salary, and to this day, notwithstanding all the fine protestations of Jullien—who, after all, is as honest a man as he can be, consistently with such a depth of folly—I look upon all he owes me as lost without redress. There is a passage on the English opera in my *Soirées de l'Orchestre* that deals with him and his extravagant theatre. It was Jullien I had in view when I spoke of the impresario who was so hard up that he seriously proposed to me to get up the opera of *Robert le Diable* in six days, though he had neither copies, nor translation, nor dresses, nor scenery, and though the singers did not know a note of the work. It was simple madness.

I cannot resist a specimen of his characteristic proceedings. Being at the end of his resources, seeing that Balfe's opera was bringing in no money, and recognising to a certain extent the impossibility of putting *Robert le Diable* on the stage in six days (even by resting on the seventh), he assembled his committee for deliberation. The committee was composed of Sir Henry Bishop, Sir George Smart, Mr. Planché (author of the libretto of Weber's *Oberon*), Mr. Gye (the manager of Drury Lane),

M. Marrezeck (the singing-master), and myself. Jullien stated his perplexities, and spoke of different operas (not translated or copied, of course) which he wished to put on the stage. It was amusing to hear the ideas and opinions of these gentlemen as the various *chefs d'œuvre* were trotted out.

I listened in amazement. When at last they came to the *Iphigénie en Tauride*, which had been announced in Jullien's prospectus (it is the custom of the London managers to announce that work every year, and never give it), the members of the committee, not knowing a note of it, were at a loss what to say. Jullien, impatient at my silence, turned sharply round and said: "Why the devil don't you speak? You must know it?"

"Of course I know it; but what do you want me to say? Tell me, and I will answer you."

"I want to know how many acts there are, who are the chief characters and voices, and, above all, the style of the scenery and dresses."

"Well, take a sheet of paper and a pen, and write to my dictation: *Iphigénie en Tauride*, an opera by Gluck, as you probably know, is in four acts. There are three male parts. Orestes (baritone), Pylades (tenor), Thoas (a bass going very high); one grand woman's part, Iphigenia (soprano); another small part, Diana (mezzo-soprano), and several leading chorus parts. The dresses, I fear, you will not think becoming. The Scythians and King Thoas are ragged savages on the shores of the Black Sea. Orestes and Pylades appear in the simple costume of two shipwrecked Greeks. Pylades alone has two dresses; he re-enters in the fourth act with a helmet on his head."

"A helmet?" cried Jullien, in a transport of delight. "We are saved! I shall order a gilt helmet from Paris,

with a coronet of pearls and a tuft of ostrich feathers as long as my arm, and we shall have forty representations."

I forget how the meeting ended, but if I were to live a hundred years I should never forget the flashing eyes, the wild gestures, and distracted enthusiasm of Jullien on learning that Pylades has a helmet, or his sublime idea of getting it from Paris, since no English workman could possibly turn out one sufficiently dazzling; or his hope of having forty splendid performances of Gluck's masterpiece, through the pearls, gilding, and feathers in Pylades' helmet. "Pro-di-gious!" as good Dominie Sampson would say, "Pro-di-gious!" I need not add that *Iphigénie* was not even studied. Jullien left London some days after the committee meeting, leaving his theatrical undertaking to fall to the ground. Meantime the singers and singing-master had, as might have been expected, pronounced against the *antique score*, and the divine tenor (Reeves) had laughed a good deal when the part of Pylades was proposed to him.

CHAPTER LXXV.

My Father's Death—Another Journey to the Côte St. André—Excursion to Meylan—Loneliness—*Stella del' monte* again—I write to her.

In one of the earlier chapters of these memoirs I have already mentioned the state in which I found Paris, on my return from London, after the Revolution of 1848. It was a mournful impression, but I was soon after visited by a grief far more searching and infinitely deeper —my father's death.

I had lost my mother ten years before, and the eternal separation had been a bitter blow. But between my father and myself there existed a friendship altogether independent of natural affection, and perhaps even deeper. Our ideas were entirely alike on many questions, the mere approach to which electrifies the intelligence of certain men. He had such lofty aspirations, was so full of feeling, so entirely and naturally good-hearted. He rejoiced that his prognostics with regard to my career had not been fulfilled.

On my return from Russia he confessed that one of his greatest desires was to hear my Requiem.

"Yes, I want to hear that terrible *Dies Iræ*, of which they talk so much; and, having done so, would gladly say my Nunc dimittis."

Alas! I was never able to give him that pleasure, and he died without hearing a single note of my music.

He was deeply and sincerely regretted, especially by our poor peasants, to whom he had been so good in many ways. My sister Nanci gave me touching details about them, when she told me of his death.

She wrote thus: "We must not regret our dear father's life, for it had become a heavy burden to him. His one wish was to die as soon as possible. He had evidently no further interest in the things of this world, and was in haste to leave it. A glorious procession of the poor and the sick, whom he had helped and cured, accompanied him to his last resting-place. Two speeches were made over his grave, amid the tears of all present; one by a young doctor, who did homage to his knowledge and his virtues, and the other by one of the people, the natural interpreter of the class among whom he spent that useful and unobtrusive life of which there are now so few examples. If anything can soften the bitter regret you feel at not being able to receive his last sigh with us, let it be the thought that his extreme weakness prevented him from feeling your absence. He was frequently unconscious, and spoke with difficulty. . . . But he asked me one day if I had any news of you and Louis." . . .

I cannot refrain from giving almost the whole of a letter from my other sister, Adèle, in which the ardent affection of her heart is laid bare without restraint.

"Vienne, Saturday, August 4th, 1848.

"Dear Brother,

"Let us embrace each other in the grief common to us both. It is heart-rending. I knew well how severely you would feel the blow, and pitied you in your loneliness. In such moments of anguish we ought to be together.

You would not have arrived in time for our beloved father to recognise you . . . let this console you for our silence, and forgive us for not giving you more timely notice. We did not know whether you were in Paris, and for six days we expected his death every moment. We were overwhelmed with grief from the Sunday till the Friday (July 28th), when he died at noon. He was constantly delirious, recognising no one except at rare intervals. The death-struggle of the last days was terrible. I can only compare him to a galvanised corpse. His head was continually in motion from the irritation of the nerves. . . . His eyes were fixed and full of pain, and his hollow voice was ever asking for impossibilities. Now and then, in the most violent of his crises, I used to clasp him passionately in my arms, and that seemed to calm him. Few only could bear the sight; but he did not suffer—at least we hope not. At any rate, the doctor attending him thought so too, and told us his nervous convulsions were the result of the opium which he took to the last. One day, dearest, our good Monica showed him your picture. He called you by name, and asked for paper and pen, which we gave him. 'Good,' said he, 'I will write presently.' What he wished to say no one knows; but this was the only time that you crossed his mind. I think he recognised us more by instinct than in reality. One day I saw, by his wandering look, that he wanted something; and when, in order to satisfy him, I said something, he answered with unspeakable tenderness: 'Nothing, my daughter, I am looking for your eyes.' I burst into tears, and shall never forget those words. My husband remained with him to the last. He had promised me to close his eyes in your place; he kept his word, and my heart will ever be grateful to him for it."

Of course this grief brought me back to the Côte St. André for a few days, to weep with my sisters under the paternal roof.

When I arrived I hurried into the study where my father had passed so many sad hours in sorrowful meditation, where he had begun my literary education, and given me my first music lessons, before he frightened me with anatomical studies. I fell half-fainting on his sofa, where my weeping sisters embraced me. I touched everything with trembling hands: his Plutarch, his memorandum-book, his pens, his stick, his gun (an innocent weapon he never used), one of my own letters on his desk. Then Nanci opened one of the drawers. "Look, dearest brother; there is his watch. Keep it. . . . How often he looked at it during his last struggles, as if to know how many hours he had still to suffer." I took the watch. It was going. It was alive, though my father was no longer living.

Before returning to Paris, I wished to revisit Grenoble, and my maternal grandfather's house at Meylan. With a strange thirst for sorrow I longed to see again the scene of my first passionate emotions. In a word I wished to embrace my whole past; to intoxicate myself with recollections, however harrowing they might be. My sisters remained at the Côte, understanding that I wished to be alone on this sacred pilgrimage, which was sure to arouse many feelings in me too sacred for the eyes of even my nearest and dearest. I feel my heart beat at the notion of relating the history of that excursion. But I will do it if it be but to prove the persistency of old feelings, apparently so irreconcilable with the new, and the reality of their co-existence in a heart which forgets nothing. So powerful is the inexorable action of memory,

that to this day I cannot see my boy's picture, at the age of ten, without pain. The sight of it makes me suffer as though I had had two sons, and death had taken the charming child, and left me only my grown-up son.

I reached Grenoble at eight in the morning, and found my uncle and cousins in the country. In my impatience to get to Meylan, I only crossed the faubourg, and walked straight to the village. . . . It was a beautiful autumn day, full of poetic charm and serenity. When I reached Meylan, and stood before the house that was once my grandfather's, and was now in the hands of one of his tenants, I found it empty. The new proprietor was installed in a fresh building at the other end of the garden.

I made my way into the drawing-room, where the family used to be when we visited our grandfather. The room was just as before, with its grotesque paintings, and fantastic paper birds gummed on the wall. There was my grandfather's chair, where he slept of an afternoon; there was his game of tric-trac. On the old sideboard, I caught sight of a wickerwork cage I had made when a child. There I had seen my uncle waltzing with Estelle. . . . I rushed out.

Half the orchard was ploughed up. I looked for the bench where my father used to sit in the evenings, wrapped for hours in his own thoughts, with his eyes fixed on St. Eynard, a colossal limestone rock, the offspring of the last struggles of the Deluge. The seat was broken, and nothing left but its two worm-eaten feet. There was the field of maize where I used to hide my melancholy when my love first made me unhappy. At the foot of that tree I began to read Cervantes. Now to the mountain.

Thirty-three years have passed away since my last visit. I feel like one who has been dead and is alive again, and, on his resurrection, finds all the feelings of his previous life as young and ardent as ever. I clambered up the rugged, lonely roads, in the direction of the white house which I had not seen except in the distance, on my return from Italy sixteen years before[1] —the house where the *Stella* once shone.

On I went, and as I mounted felt my heart beating faster and faster. I thought I recognised an avenue of trees on the left side of the road, and followed it for some way, but it ended in an unknown farm, and was not the one I wanted. I resumed my road; it ended in the vineyards, and I had evidently lost my way. In my mind I could see the real road as plainly as if I had gone over it the night before; there used to be a little fountain, which I had not yet come across. Where was I then? . . . where was the fountain? The mistake only served to heighten my anxiety. I resolved to go and inquire at the farm I had just seen. I went into the barn, where the threshers were at work. They stopped their flails for a moment at sight of me; and I, trembling like a thief pursued by the gensdarmes, asked if they could point out the way to the house formerly inhabited by Madame Gautier. One of them scratched his head.

"Madame Gautier?" said he, "there is no one of that name in this part of the country."

"Yes, an old lady . . . she had two young nieces,[2] who used to come and visit her every autumn."

"I remember them," interrupted the wife of the thresher; "don't you recollect? . . . Miss Estelle, so pretty that

[1] [See vol. i. p. 260.]

[2] No, not two nieces—I made a mistake—but two grand-daughters.

everyone used to stop at the church door on Sundays to see her pass."

"Ah! now it's beginning to come back to me . . . yes, yes; Madame Gautier. . . . But it is a long time ago, you see . . . her house now belongs to a Grenoble shopkeeper. . . . It is up there. You will come to the fountain a little way here behind our vineyard, and then turn to the left."

"The fountain? Ah! now I know my way. Many thanks. I am sure not to blunder again."

And, crossing a field close by the farm, I fell at last into the right path.

Soon I heard the murmur of the little fountain . . . there I was. . . . And there is the path; and the right avenue at last. I feel that it is there. . . . I shall see her. Heavens! how the air intoxicates me; my head is turning! I stopped for a moment to control the beating of my heart. . . . I reached the avenue gate. . . . A gentleman in a round jacket—doubtless the prosaic owner of my sanctuary—stood there, lighting a cigar.

He looked at me with an air of amazement.

I passed him without a word, and continued to climb. I wanted to reach an old tower that used to stand on the top of the hill, and from which my eye could take in all at a glance. I went on without once turning round. I must first reach the top. . . . But the tower, the tower! Where was it? . . . Had they pulled it down? No; there it was . . . they had destroyed the upper part, and the trees had grown so tall as to hide the rest. At last I reached it. Here, where the young beech trees are growing, we had sat together, my father and I, and I had played him *La Musette de Nina* on the flute.

Estelle must have come there. Perhaps I am standing

on the very spot. Now, let me see. I turn round, and my glance takes in the whole picture . . . the sacred house, the garden, the trees, the valley below, the winding Isère, the Alps, the snow, the glaciers—all that she saw and admired. I inhale the blue air she breathed. . . . Ah! . . . A cry, that no human language can ever reproduce, is repeated by the echo of St. Eynard. Yes, I see; I see again and I adore; the past is before me; I am once more a boy—life, beauty, first love, infinite poetry, these are mine! I flung myself on my knees, and I cried to valley, mountains, and skies: "Estelle! Estelle! Estelle!" I clasped the ground in a convulsive embrace, I gnawed the grass, and a feeling of indescribable and terrible desolation surged up within me. "Bleed, my heart, bleed! . . . but leave me the strength to suffer still!"

At length I rose, and as I wandered down, I devoured with my eyes all the scattered objects on the hills. I went along, smelling on the right hand and on the left, like a lost dog in search of its master. There is the cliff where I was walking when she called out: "Take care! Don't go so near the edge!" Here is the thicket of brambles where she stooped to gather blackberries. And there must be the rock where her lovely feet once rested—where I saw her grand, upright figure as she stood gazing at the valley. . . . That day I said to myself, with the simplicity of childish sentimentality: "When I am grown up, and have become a famous composer, I will write an opera on Florian's 'Estelle;' I will dedicate it to her, and bring the score to this very rock, where she shall find it some morning when she comes to see the sun rise." Where is the rock? . . . Nowhere to be found. . . . Disappeared entirely. The vine-dressers

have crushed it, or the mountain winds have buried it in sand.

That beautiful cherry tree! Her hand once rested upon its trunk. . . . But what is that close by? . . . Something that seems to recall her more than all the rest. . . . Something that resembled her in grace and elegance. . . . What is it? My memory is failing. Ah! a plant of pink sweet-pea, from which she gathered blossoms. It was at the turn of the path. . . . I rushed to it. . . . Eternal Nature! . . . there are the pink peas still, and the plant, richer and more bushy than of old, is swaying its perfumed blossoms to the breath of the breeze.

Time, thou capricious reaper! the rock has vanished, and the grass remains. I was on the point of tearing it all up. But no, beloved plant, remain and bloom in thy calm solitude, the emblem of that portion of my soul that I left here long ago, and which will abide here till I die! I will but gather two of thy fresh-coloured butterfly-blossoms—perennial butterflies! Farewell! farewell, beloved and beautiful plant; mountains and valleys, old tower, farewell! Old St. Eynard, heaven of my star, farewell! Farewell, my romantic childhood, and the last reflections of a pure love! The current of time bears me onward. Farewell, Stella . . . Stella! . . .

And I descended the mountain, mournful as a spectre returning to the grave. Again I passed the avenue of her home. The gentleman with the cigar had disappeared; he no longer defiled[1] the precincts of my temple. But still I dared not enter, despite my passionate desire. I went on slowly, slowly, lingering at each step, losing sight of each object with an anguish of regret. No need now to control the beatings of my heart. I could not hear

[1] [What a curious relic of the old-fashioned hatred of tobacco!]

them. I was dead once more. And everywhere there was sweet sunshine, solitude, and silence. . . . Two hours later I was crossing the Isère, and a little before sunset I reached the hamlet of Murianette on the opposite bank, and found my cousins and their mother. The next day we returned together to Grenoble. My manner was, no doubt, strange and preoccupied. When left alone for a moment with my cousin Victor, he could not help saying: "What's the matter with you? I have never seen you like this." "What's the matter with me? Well, you will certainly laugh at me; but since you ask the question I will answer it. . . . Besides, it will relieve me, for I am stifling. . . . Yesterday I was at Meylan."

"I know. What did you find there?"

"Among other things, Madame Gautier's house. . . . Do you know her[1] niece, Madame F——?"

"Yes, the one they used to call the beautiful Estelle D——."

"Well, I loved her to distraction when I was twelve . . . and I love her still!" . . .

"But, you idiot," replied Victor, with a burst of laughter, "she is fifty-one by this time. Her eldest son is twenty-two; he and I went through our law-course together."

And his laughter broke out again; I joined it, but mine was as convulsive and distorted and desolate as the rays of an April sun through the rain.

"Yes, it is absurd, I know; and yet it is . . . it is absurd, but it is real. . . . It is puerile, but it is infinite. Don't laugh; or yes, laugh if you will, it does not signify. Where is she now? where is she? You must know." . . .

"Since her husband's death, she has been living at Vif." . . .

[1] Her grand-daughter.

"Vif! is it far from here?"

"About ten miles."

"I shall go there. I want to see her."

"Are you off your head?"

"I shall find some excuse for going."

"I beg of you, Hector, not to do such a senseless thing."

"I want to see her."

"You will never have the presence of mind to get through such a visit properly."

"I want to see her."

"You will only make a fool of yourself, and compromise her, that's all."

"I want to see her."

"But do just consider."

"I want to see her."

"Fifty-one years old! . . . More than half-a-century! . . . What will you find? Would it not be better to keep your fresh and youthful memories, and preserve your ideal?"

"O execrable Time! horrible profaner! At any rate, I will write to her."

"Write away. Good heavens, what a lunatic!"

He handed me a pen, and fell into an arm-chair, with a fresh burst of merriment, in which I joined by fits and starts; and in the midst of such sunshine and rain, wrote this letter, which I was obliged to copy on account of the tears that blurred all the lines:

"MADAME,

"There are certain faithful and persistent admirations that only die with us. . . . I was twelve years old when I beheld Mademoiselle Estelle for the first time

at Meylan. You could not have known then how you overwhelmed that childish heart, that was ready to break beneath the disproportionate burthen of its feelings. I believe that you were even so pardonably cruel as sometimes to laugh at me. Seventeen years later, on my return from Italy, my eyes filled with tears—the silent tears of memory—when I entered our valley, and caught sight of the house where you once lived, on the romantic heights commanding St. Eynard. Some days afterwards, before I knew your new name, I was asked to deliver a letter addressed to you. I waited for Madame F—— at one of the stations of the coach by which she was travelling. I presented her with the letter; a violent shock at my heart made my hand tremble as it approached hers. I recognised the object of my first admiration, the *Stella del' monte*, whose radiant beauty illuminated the morning of my life. Yesterday, madame, after long and violent agitation, after far distant travels though Europe, after labours, of which an echo may perhaps have reached you, I undertook a long contemplated pilgrimage. Once more I desired to see everything, and I have done so: the little house, the garden, the avenue, the hill, the tower, the wood, the everlasting rock, and the sublime scenery so worthy of your frequent contemplation. Nothing is changed. Time has respected the temple of my memory. But strangers inhabit it now; your flowers are cultivated by other hands, and no one in the world, not even yourself, could have guessed why a gloomy-looking man, with features furrowed by labour and sorrow, should yesterday have penetrated to its most secret recesses. *O quante lagrime!* . . .

"Farewell, madame, I must return to my whirlwind.

You will probably never see me, never know who I am; and I hope you will pardon the strange liberty I am now taking in writing to you. I forgive you beforehand if you smile at the recollections of the man, as you laughed at the admiration of the child.

"DESPISED LOVE."[1]

"Grenoble, December 6th, 1848."

And notwithstanding my cousin's jokes I sent this letter. I know not what became of it. Since then I never heard of Madame F—— again.

In a few months' time I must return to Grenoble. And then I feel I shall not be able to resist. I shall go to Vif.[2]

[1] An expression of Shakespeare's in *Hamlet*.

[2] I never went. But five years ago I heard that Madame F—— was living at Lyons. Is she still alive?

I dare not find out (February, 1854).

She is still living (August, 1854).

CHAPTER LXXVI.

Death of my Sister—And of my Wife—Her Funeral—My position in the Musical World—Impossibility of braving the hatred felt for me—Cabal at Covent Garden—The Coterie at the Paris Conservatoire—Symphony dreamed and forgotten—Charming welcome in Germany—King of Hanover—Duke of Weimar—King of Saxony's Intendant—My Farewells.

I MUST have done with these memoirs, which I find almost as wearisome as a *feuilleton*. When I shall have written the few remaining pages, I think I shall have said enough to give a fairly accurate idea of the principal events in my life, and of the vortex of feeling, labour, and sorrow in which I am destined to revolve, until I shall revolve no longer. The road which remains, whatever its length, must certainly strongly resemble that already passed; everywhere the same deep ruts, the same rough stones, the same broken ground, crossed here and there by some clear brook, shaded by some peaceful grove, and surmounted by some sublime rock which I shall laboriously ascend, and there bathe myself in the evening sunshine, after the cold rain endured all day in the plains. Men and things do indeed change, but so slowly that the change is hardly perceptible in the short span of human existence. To derive benefit from it, one ought to live two hundred years.

I have lost my eldest sister, Nanci. She died of a cancer, after six months' terrible suffering, that forced the most heart-rending cries from her, day and night. Adèle, my other dear sister, who went to Grenoble to nurse her, and never left her till all was over, very nearly succumbed to the fatigue and distress caused by such protracted agony. And no doctor was bold enough to put an end to her sufferings by a dose of chloroform! They give it to a patient to prevent the pain of a brief surgical operation, and yet refuse to employ it for avoiding a six months' torture, when it is certain that no remedy, not even time, can cure the terrible disease, and when death is obviously the supreme boon, deliverance, joy, happiness! . . .

But the law forbids it, and religion is not less formally opposed to it.

And no doubt she herself would have refused such deliverance had it been proposed to her. "God's will be done." As if everything that happened were not the will of God, and as if deliverance by means of a gentle and speedy death were not just as much the will of God as useless and execrable torture! . . .

How absurd are all these questions of fatality, divinity, free-will, etc.! Endless absurdity! the human understanding reels under them, and cannot but lose itself. In any case, the most horrible thing in this world for living and sentient beings is inexorable suffering and unreasonable torture; and one must either be a barbarian or an idiot, or both, not to employ the sure and gentle means used in these days for ending it. The very savages are wiser and more humane.

My wife is also dead; but, at any rate, without any great suffering. My poor Henrietta! After being para-

lysed for four years, and unable either to move or speak, she drew her last breath at Montmartre, March 3rd, 1854. My son, then at Cherbourg, was fortunate enough to obtain leave to spend a few hours with her, only four days before her death. The interview sweetened her last moments. I, too, was fortunately in France at the time. I had left her for about two hours, and on my return all was over. . . . Her last breath had been drawn, and she was already covered with the fatal shroud, which I withdrew to kiss her pale forehead for the last time. Her portrait, painted in the time of her splendour, glowing with beauty and genius, hung beside her couch, a sad contrast to the poor disfigured form beneath it.

I will not attempt to give an idea of my grief. It was complicated by a feeling which, though never before so intense, had always been a most painful one for me to bear—*the feeling of pity*. In the midst of all my regret for our past love, I felt almost overwhelmed by the immense, terrible, infinite pity, inspired by the recollection of my poor Henrietta's sorrows: her ruin before our marriage, her accident, the failure of her last dramatic attempt in Paris, her voluntary but ever-regretted renunciation of her adored art, her eclipsed glory, the rising fame and fortune of her mediocre imitators of both sexes, our domestic differences, her inextinguishable jealousy (in the end not unfounded), our separation, the death of all her relations, the enforced absence of her son, my long and frequent journeys, her wounded pride at being the cause of expense which she knew I could ill afford, the mistaken idea that the affection of the English public had been alienated from her by her love for France, her broken heart, her vanished beauty, her ruined health, her increasing bodily sufferings, the loss of speech and movement, the

impossibility of making herself understood, the long vista of death and oblivion.

Destruction! Fire and thunder! Blood and tears! My brain shrivels at the thought of such horrors.

Shakespeare, Shakespeare! where art thou? He alone, of all intelligent beings, could have understood me . . . have understood us both. He alone could have looked with pity on two poor artists, at once loving and lacerating each other. Shakespeare, the true man, if he is still in existence, must know how to succour the wretched. He is our father, our father in heaven—if there be a heaven. An almighty being, existing in infinite indifference, is an atrocious absurdity. Shakespeare alone is the god of an artist. Receive us into thy bosom, O father, and hide us there. *De profundis clamavi ad te!* Death, annihilation, what are they? The immortality of genius—what? "O fool, fool, fool!"

I was unaided in my sad duties. The Protestant pastor required for the ceremony lived in the suburbs at the other end of the town, in the Rue M. le Prince. I went to him at eight o'clock in the evening. An accidental circumstance led me past the Odéon. The theatre was lighted up for a fashionable piece. It was there I saw *Hamlet* for the first time, twenty-six years ago, when the glory of my poor dead wife suddenly burst forth like a brilliant meteor; there I saw a crowd in tears over the grief, the poetic and heart-breaking insanity of Ophelia; there I saw Henrietta Smithson, when recalled after the final catastrophe in *Hamlet* by the most critical audience in France, return to acknowledge the plaudits of her admirers. There, also, I saw Juliet for the first and last time. How often, on winter nights, did I walk up and down under those arcades in feverish anxiety. There was the door by which I saw her enter for a rehearsal

of *Othello*. She did not then even know of my existence; and had a pale, worn, obscure youth, leaning against one of the pillars of the theatre and devouring her with wild glances, been pointed out as her future husband, she would assuredly have treated the idea as absurd.

And yet it is he who is preparing for thy last journey, poor Ophelia, he is on his way to a priest, with Laertes' words in his mouth—"What ceremonies else?" he who so tormented thee, and so suffered through thee, after having suffered for thee; he who, in spite of all his wrongs, might say like Hamlet:

Forty thousand brothers would not have loved her as I loved her.

Shakespeare! Shakespeare! Again I feel my sorrow overwhelming me like a flood, and again I seek thee:

Father! father! where art thou?

The next day, two or three of my literary friends—D'Ortigue, Brizeux, Léon de Wailly—and several artists, the good Baron Taylor, and a few other kind-hearted people, attended Henrietta to her last resting-place, *out of friendship for me*. Twenty-five years before, the whole of intelligent Paris would have attended her obsequies, in admiration and adoration of *her*. The poets, painters, and sculptors, the actors to whom she had just given such noble examples of movement, gesture, and attitude, musicians who had felt the melody of her tender accents and the lacerating reality of her cries of anguish—lovers, dreamers, philosophers—all would then have followed her coffin in tears. . . .

And now, while she is proceeding thus almost in solitude to the cemetery, ungrateful and forgetful Paris

is grovelling in its own smoke; and he who, with all his love, has not the courage to follow her to the grave weeps in her deserted garden; while her son, battling against the tempest far away, is rocked on the topmast of a ship on the gloomy ocean.

Hic jacet! She lies in the little cemetery of Montmartre, on the slope of the hill, her face turned towards England, though she never wished to see it again. Her modest tomb bears this inscription: "Henrietta Constance Berlioz-Smithson, born at Ennis, in Ireland; died at Montmartre, March 3rd, 1854."

The newspapers announced her death in cold, commonplace language. Janin alone had the heart and the memory to pen the following lines:

"With what cruel rapidity pass away the divinities of fable! How frail they are, these frail children of Shakespeare and Corneille! Alas! it is not so very long ago, when, one summer's evening, in all the arrogance of youth, we were collected in a balcony overlooking the road to Verona, Juliet with her Romeo. Juliet, in all the delirium of happiness, was listening to the nightingale of the night and the lark of the morning. She was in white, and listening dreamily, with a sublime fire in her half-averted glance. In a low, pure voice she rang out the prose and poetry of Shakespeare in triumphant tones, instinct with undying life. A whole world was hanging on the grace, the voice, the enchanting power of that woman.

"Miss Smithson was scarcely twenty when she thus succeeded in winning the sympathy and admiration of an audience enchanted by such a novelty. And thus, all unconsciously, this young woman became an unknown poem, a new passion, an absolute revolution. She it was

who gave the signal to Dorval, Lemaître, Malibran, Victor Hugo, and Berlioz. She was called Juliet . . . Ophelia. Eugène Delacroix himself was inspired by her when he painted his sweet picture of Ophelia. She is in the act of falling; one hand, though about to yield, is still clinging to the branch. With the other she presses her last garland to her lovely breast; the hem of her robe already touches the rising waters; the scenery is sad and gloomy, the wave that is soon to engulf her is visible in the distance; the unhappy girl, with her sweet songs, is dragged downwards by her heavy garments to the mire and to death!

"This admirable and touching actress at length took another name, one borne also by Malibran, that of Desdemona; and the Moor as he embraced her called her his 'fair warrior.'

"I see her still, even at this distance, pale and wan as the fair Venetian of Angelo, tyrant of Padua! She is alone, listening to the rain and wind howling without, that devoted and entrancingly beautiful maiden whom the poet Shakespeare surrounded with all his love and respect. She is alone and in fear—her soul troubled by an inexpressible uneasiness, her arms bare, and a little of her white shoulder visible.

"In short, Miss Smithson was marvellous, and more like a vision from on high than a creature of earth! And now she has been dead a week, still dreaming of that glory which alike came and went so swiftly! Oh, visions! oh, regrets! oh, sorrows! In my youth they used to sing a chorus in praise of Juliet Capulet. The funeral march had a desolating effect amidst the ceaseless refrain, 'Throw flowers, throw

flowers!'[1] It brought one down into the gloomy cavern where Juliet lay slumbering, and the mournful melody accomplished its task as it told of the horrors of those mortuary vaults. 'Throw flowers, throw flowers! Juliet is dead,' said the funeral song, after the fashion of a chorus of Father Æschylus. 'Juliet is dead (throw flowers!), death weighs her down like frost on April grass (throw flowers!)' Thus do the instruments of the dance serve as funeral knells, the marriage supper becomes a banquet of the dead, the wedding flowers ornament a tomb." . . .

Soon afterwards I received from Liszt an affectionate letter of the sort that he alone could write. "She inspired you," he said; "you sang of her; her task was done." . . .

I have no more to say with regard to the two great passions which influenced my heart and my intellect so long and so powerfully. The one was a memory of childhood. It comes to me radiant with smiles, adorned with all the charms of a perfect landscape, the mere sight of which was sufficient to move me. Estelle was then the hamadryad of my valley at Tempe; and at the age of twelve I experienced for the first time, and together, love and the love of nature.

The other love came to me in my manhood; with Shakespeare in the burning bush of Sinai, amid the thunders and lightnings of poetry entirely new to me. It prostrated me, and my heart and whole being were invaded by a cruel, maddening passion, in which the love of a great artist and a great art were mingled together, intensifying the other.

[1] Janin alludes here to the chorus of the funeral procession in my symphony of *Romeo and Juliet*, where, it is true, those words are constantly chanted.

The power of such an antithesis may be imagined, if indeed there be any antithesis. Between Henrietta and myself, the Meylan idyll was no mystery. She knew how vividly it remained in my mind. Who has not had his first idyll? Notwithstanding her jealous temper, she had too much sense to be hurt. Indeed, she used sometimes to rally me gently on the subject.

Those who cannot understand this will still less enter into another peculiarity of my nature. I have a vague feeling of poetic love whenever I smell a rose, and for a long time past have felt the same at sight of a beautiful harp. When I see that instrument, I can hardly restrain myself from falling on my knees and embracing it. Estelle was the rose, "left blooming alone;" Henrietta was the harp, that took part in all my concerts, in all my joys and sorrows; and of which, alas! I broke many strings.

And now, if not at the end of my career, I am at any rate on the last steep decline—exhausted, consumed; but ever ardent, and full of an energy that sometimes revolts with an almost overwhelming force. I begin to know French, to write a page of music, verse, or prose fairly well; I can direct and animate an orchestra; I adore and venerate art under all forms. . . . But I belong to a nation which has ceased to be interested in the nobler manifestations of intelligence, and whose only deity is the golden calf. The Parisians have become a barbarous people. In the rich houses you will scarcely find a single library. I am not speaking of musical libraries. No; books are no longer bought. Miserable novels are hired from the circulating library at a penny per volume; such is the literary food of all classes of society. In the same way, people subscribe to the music-

shop, for a few francs a month, in order to select from the infinite commonplace rubbish of our day, some *chef d'œuvre* of the sort which Rabelais has characterised by that contemptuous epithet.

The industrialism of art, followed by all the base instincts it flatters and caresses, marches at the head of an absurd procession, full of stupid disdain for its vanquished enemies.

In Paris, therefore, I can do nothing, for there I am considered only too fortunate to be able to fulfil the task of writing *feuilletons*—the only one, some would say, for which I was sent into the world. I know well what I could accomplish in the way of dramatic music, but it would be both useless and dangerous to attempt it. In the first place, most of our lyrical theatres are bad, musically speaking, the Opéra especially disgraceful. In the next place, I could not give full scope to my thoughts in this style of composition, unless I felt myself to be as completely master of a great theatre as I am of my orchestra when conducting a symphony.

I should require everyone to be under my orders, from the first soprano and the first tenor, singers, musicians, dancers, and supernumeraries, down to the carpenters and scene-shifters. A lyrical theatre as I take it, is first and foremost a vast musical instrument. I can play it, but in order to play it well it must be entrusted to me without reserve. That is just what will never take place. The intrigues, conspiracies, and cabals of my enemies would only have too full scope. They dare not come and hiss me in a concert-room, but in a huge theatre like the Opéra they would not fail to do so.

Not only should I have to submit to the hostilities promoted by my criticisms, but also to the fury excited by the tendencies of my music, which, taken by itself, is exceedingly popular. They say, very truly: "The day that the public *en masse* understand or even enjoy such compositions, ours will become worthless." I had a proof of all this in London, when a band of Italians almost drove *Benvenuto Cellini* from the Covent Garden stage. They cried, groaned, and hissed from first to last; they even tried to prevent the performance of the overture to the *Carnaval Romain*, which formed the *entr'acte*, and had often been applauded at the Philharmonic Concerts.[1] Public opinion at any rate placed Costa, the conductor of Covent Garden, at the head of this comically furious cabal. I had attacked him several times in my *feuilletons* on the subject of the liberties he takes with the music of the great masters, by cutting, expanding, reinstrumenting, and mutilating them in every conceivable manner. If Costa is the culprit (which is not at all unlikely), he showed rare skill at all events in lulling my suspicions by his eagerness to be of use to me during the rehearsals.[2]

Two hundred and thirty of the London artists, indignant at this meanness, expressed their sympathy by offering their services for a *Testimonial Concert* at Exeter Hall, but this was never carried out. Beale, the publisher, one of my best friends, brought me a sum of two hundred guineas from a body of amateurs, headed by

[1] [The opera of *Benvenuto Cellini* was produced (and damned) at Covent Garden, June 25, 1853. The *Carnaval Romain* was first played at the Philharmonic, under Costa, on the 30th of the previous May. The only piece of Berlioz which appears in the programmes before that date is the overture to *Benvenuto*, March 15, 1841.]

[2] [Conduct of this sort was not like Costa.]

Messrs. Broadwood, the celebrated piano-makers. It would have been altogether inconsistent with French habits for me to accept this gift, though dictated by genuine kindness and generosity. We are not all Paganinis. However, I was far more touched by these proofs of affection than wounded by the insults of the cabal.

In Germany, no doubt, I should have nothing of this sort to encounter. But I do not know German. I should have to compose to a French text, which would have afterwards to be translated; and that is an immense disadvantage. The composition of a grand opera would also take at least a year and a half, during which time I should earn nothing; nor should I receive any other compensation, since in Germany the composers of operas do not receive fees. Besides, the first performance of *Faust* in Prussia shows what hostilities I had provoked among the musicians of the Berlin orchestra by a harmless observation published in the *Journal des Débats*. At Leipzig also, although my music is now heard with ears very different from those that listened to it in Mendelssohn's time (as I saw for myself, and as I am assured by Ferdinand David), there are still certain small fanatics, pupils of the Conservatoire, who regard me, without knowing why, as destructive, and as the Attila of music, who honour me with a furious hatred, write me insolent letters, and make faces behind my back in the corridors of the Gewandhaus. Certain kapell-meisters also, whose peace I disturb, play me rather mean tricks now and then.

But this inevitable antagonism, even when joined to the perfectly natural opposition of a small section of the German press,[1] is as nothing in comparison of the fury

[1] In the German, as in the Paris press, there are men of fixed ideas, who get into a fury at the mere sight of my name on a placard

that would be vented against me in Paris if I showed myself at the theatre.

For the last three years I have been tormented by the idea of a vast opera, of which I should write both words and music, as I did for *L'Enfance du Christ*. I am resisting the temptation, and trust I shall continue to resist it to the end.[1]

To me the subject seems grand, and deeply touching —a sure proof that to the Parisians it would be insipid and wearisome. Even were I mistaken in attributing to them "a taste so utterly unlike my own"—to quote the great Corneille—I should never find anyone sufficiently clever and devoted to interpret the principal part, since it requires beauty, a grand voice, and real dramatic talent, a perfect musicianship, and a heart and soul of fire. Still less could I hope for all the other various resources which must be absolutely at my own disposal, without let or hindrance from anyone. My blood boils at the bare notion of again encountering those senseless obstacles to the mounting of such a work, which I myself have endured, and daily see endured by other composers writing for our grand opera. A collision between myself and such malevolent idiots would now be

or in a paper, like a bull at the sight of a red rag. They attribute to me a whole world of absurdities that are hatched in their own small brains, imagine they hear things in my works which do not exist and do not hear what is to be heard; they fight windmills with a noble zeal, and if asked their opinion on the chord of D major, having been told beforehand that I had written it, they would exclaim indignantly, "A detestable chord!" Those poor wretches are maniacs; there are such, and have been such, everywhere and in all times.

[1] Alas, no! I could not resist. I have just finished the book and music of *Les Troyens*, an opera in five acts. What is to become of this huge work? . . . (1858.)

full of risk. I feel quite capable of anything as far as they are concerned, and should slay the rascals like dogs.

I do not feel the least desire to add to the number of useful and agreeable works called comic operas, daily turned out in Paris like tarts from the oven. In that respect I am not like the corporal in the play, whose "ambition was to be a servant." I prefer to remain a simple soldier.[1]

I must also add that Meyerbeer's influence, and the pressure exercised by his immense fortune, not less than by his *genuine* eclectic talent, on managers, artists, critics, and public alike, are such as to render any serious success at the Opéra almost impossible. That deleterious influence will probably continue to be felt ten years after his death. Henri Heine declares that he *has paid in advance*.[2] As for the musical concerts which I might give in Paris, I have already said how I am circumstanced, and how indifferent the public has become to everything outside the theatre.

Meantime, the coterie of the Conservatoire has shut its doors upon me. The Minister of the Interior came forward one day at a distribution of prizes, and announced to the audience that this room (the only good one in Paris) was the exclusive property of the Conservatoire Society, and was not henceforth to be lent to anyone for

[1] A few years ago, however, notwithstanding the above, I did consent to write a work of that sort. My friend Carvalho had contracted, under a penalty of ten thousand francs, to give me a libretto by a stated time, which I was to set to music for this theatre. But when the time arrived, Carvalho had forgotten his engagement; and, consequently, that promise was no better kept than all the rest had been!

[2] I believe I have said elsewhere, and I now repeat, that Meyerbeer has not merely the luck to have talent, but in a very high degree the talent to have luck.

the purpose of concerts. "Anyone," of course, meant me, for, with some two or three exceptions, no one but myself had given any grand musical performances there for twenty years.

That celebrated society, of which nearly all the performing members are my friends or partisans, is directed by a conductor and a small clique who are my enemies, and who took good care not to admit the most insignificant of my compositions into their concerts. Some six or seven years ago, they asked me for two pieces out of *Faust;* but, as if to make up for the concession, they placed them between the *finale* from Spontini's *Vestale* and Beethoven's Symphony in C minor. As good luck would have it, these gentlemen were disappointed in their endeavour, and, in spite of its formidable neighbours, the sylph scene in *Faust* excited genuine enthusiasm, and was encored. But M. Girard, the conductor, in an exceedingly dull and awkward manner, pretended that he could not find the place in the score, and, notwithstanding a unanimous encore, would not repeat it. Its success, however, was none the less evident. From that time forth accordingly my works were avoided like the plague. Not one among the many millionaires of Paris would ever entertain the idea of doing anything for good music. We do not possess one good public concert-room, and it would never enter into the head of one of our Crœsuses to build one. Paganini's example was thrown away, and what that noble artist did for me will remain a unique feature in history.[1]

To be a composer in Paris one must rely entirely on oneself, and produce works of a serious character, having

[1] [See chapter xlix.]

no connection with a theatre. One must be content with mutilated, incomplete, uncertain, and consequently, more or less imperfect performances, for want of rehearsals for which one cannot pay;[1] inconvenient and uncomfortable rooms; annoyances of all sorts arising from the necessity of employing the players from the theatres, who think more of the interests of their own managers than of the composer.

One has to endure the robbery of the tax-collectors for the *droits des hospices*, who never take into account the expenses of the concert, and aggravate one's loss by deducting their eighth from the gross receipts.[2] One has further to hear hasty and, necessarily, false judgments on complicated works heard under the above conditions, and seldom heard more than once or twice; and, last of all, one has to spend a great deal of time and money, to say nothing of the strength of mind and will which it is humiliating to have to use against such obstacles. The artist, however gifted he may be with these qualities, is therefore like a loaded shell, which goes straight to its point and overthrows everything on its way, but is doomed to burst and perish at the end of its course. Speaking generally, I would make every possible sacrifice; but there are cir-

[1] The most absurd theatrical puppet-show is rehearsed nearly every day for a month, while I had to produce my *Romeo and Juliet* in public after four rehearsals, and many other works after only two. [This will always be the case, everywhere, till the public is so highly educated in music as to prefer the good works to the "puppet-shows"—in other words, till it is as much the pecuniary interest of managers to produce perfect performances of symphonies and serious operas as of dance music and operettas. We do not seem to be much nearer that happy time than we ever were.]

[2] [This peculiar tax is, thank goodness, at present confined to France.]

cumstances in which sacrifice ceases to be generous, and becomes in the highest degree culpable.

Two years ago, before my wife's health had become hopeless and when it was the cause of great expense to me, I dreamt that I was composing a symphony. On awaking next morning I recollected nearly the whole of the first movement, which I can still remember was an *allegro* in 2 time, in the key of A minor.

I had gone to my table to write it down when I suddenly reflected: "If I write this part I shall let myself be carried on to write the rest. The natural tendency of my mind is sure to make it very long. I may perhaps spend three or four months upon it (I took seven to write *Romeo and Juliet*); meantime I shall do no *feuilletons*, or next to none, and my income will suffer. When the symphony is finished I shall be weak enough to allow my copyist to copy it out, and thus immediately incur a debt of one thousand or twelve hundred francs. Once the parts are copied I shall be harassed by the temptation to have the work performed; I shall give a concert, in which the receipts will barely cover half the expenses; I shall lose what I have not got; I shall want the necessaries of life for my poor invalid, and shall have no money either for myself or for my son's keep on board ship!" These thoughts made me shudder! I threw down my pen, saying, "Bah! I shall have forgotten the symphony to-morrow." But the following night the obstinate symphony again presented itself, and I distinctly heard the *allegro* in A minor, and, what was more, saw it written down. I awoke in a state of feverish agitation, and hummed the theme. The form and character of it pleased me extremely; I was about to rise . . . but the reflections of the preceding night again restrained me. I hardened

myself against temptation. I clung to the hope of forgetting. At last I fell asleep again, and when I awoke next day all recollection had vanished for ever.

Some young fanatic—whose contempt I forgive beforehand—will say: "Coward! you should have dared! You should have written! You should have ruined yourself! You have no right thus to banish thought, and allow a work of art to perish because you are struggling for life!" My friend, you, who call me a coward, would be less severe if you saw the sight that was then too constantly before my eyes. In early days, when the consequences of my bold ventures were still doubtful, I never hesitated. At that time there was a small select audience in Paris. The Orleans family and the Queen herself took an interest in music. My wife was then in her prime, and was ever the first to encourage me. "You ought to bring out this work," she would say, "and have it properly and grandly performed. Fear nothing, we will bear whatever it may cost us. We must! Go on!" And I did go on. But at the time of my dream, when she was lying there half-dead, only able to groan, and requiring three nurses and a daily visit from the doctor; when I was certain—as absolutely certain as that the Parisians are barbarians—to make nothing of all my work but a dead loss, it was no cowardice to abstain. No! my conscience tells me that I was simply humane; and while convinced that I am quite as much devoted to art as any of my young critics, I believe that I honour it by not treating it as a monster greedy for human victims, and by proving that it has not left me so wholly devoid of reason as not to be capable of distinguishing courage from ferocity. If I have gradually yielded to the allurements of music in writing my sacred trilogy *L'Enfance du*

Christ, it is because my position is no longer the same, and that I am no longer bound by such imperative duty. I am also certain to have this work easily and frequently performed in Germany, where I often go, where indeed I have made four journeys in the last year and a half.[1]

My welcome there is heartier every time I go; the German artists are more and more sympathetic. At Leipzig, Dresden, Hanover, Brunswick, Weimar, Carlsruhe, and Frankfort, I am overwhelmed with marks of friendship for which I can find no adequate expression. On the public also, the intendants of the royal theatres and private orchestras, and most of the ruling princes, I can bestow nothing but the highest praise. The charming young King of Hanover and the Queen, his Antigone,[2] were so interested in my music that they used to come to my rehearsals at eight o'clock in the morning, and would sometimes remain there till noon, the better to penetrate, as the King lately said, into the inner meaning of the work, and become familiar with the novelty of the details. He was enthusiastic in his admiration of my *Lear* overture: "Magnificent, M. Berlioz, magnificent; your orchestra speaks, you have no need of words. I have followed each scene: the entrance of the king into the council-chamber, the storm on the heath, the terrible prison scenes, and the laments of Cordelia. Oh! that

[1] Since writing the above, M. Benazet, the manager at Baden, has urged me more than once to organise and conduct the annual festival there, with everything I could desire for the performance of my works. His generosity far surpassed anything ever done for me by those European sovereigns whom I have the most reason to be grateful to. "I give you *carte blanche*," he said again this year. "Get all the artists you want from wherever you please, and make any terms you like. I consent to everything beforehand."

[2] The King of Hanover is blind.

Cordelia! how you have painted her! so tender and so timid! it is heartrending, and how beautiful!"[1]

When I last visited Hanover, the Queen begged me to insert two pieces from *Romeo and Juliet* in my programme; one in particular which was a great favourite of hers—the love-scene. The King afterwards formally requested me to return in the winter, to superintend the performance of the whole of *Romeo and Juliet*, which had been then only partially given. "If you do not find our resources sufficient," added he, "you shall have artists from Brunswick, Hamburg, and even Dresden."

The new Grand-duke of Weimar said, as I was leaving after my last visit: "Give me your hand, M. Berlioz, that I may press it with sincere and warm admiration; and never forget that the Weimar Theatre is always open to you." M. de Lutichau, intendant to the King of Saxony, offered me the post of kapell-meister at Dresden on its next vacancy. "If you would take it" (I quote his own words), "what grand things we would do with our artists, whom you think so first-rate and who are so fond of you, and whom you conduct as no one else can. Dresden would become the musical centre of Germany." I do not know whether I shall decide on settling in Saxony when the moment comes. . . . It is a matter for much consideration. Liszt is of opinion that I ought to accept. My friends in Paris think differently. I have not made up my mind, and besides, the post is not yet vacant. They are now proposing at Dresden to bring out my *Cellini*, which has already been revived at Weimar by the admirable Liszt.

[1] I never saw my Henrietta in that part, which I can well believe to have been one of her sublimest, but I have heard her recite some of the scenes.

In that case I must certainly superintend the first performances. But I will not now occupy myself with the future; indeed, I have already expatiated too much on the past, though many curious episodes and sad details are still left untold. I end . . . with fervent thanks to that sacred Germany where the worship of art is still kept pure; to generous England; to Russia, who saved me; to all my kind friends in France, and to all the noble hearts and lofty minds that I have ever known in any nation. I am happy to have known you, and I shall always retain the most tender recollections of our relations. And as for you madmen, more stupid than dogs or bulls, my Guildensterns, my Rosencranzes, my Iagos, my precious Osrics, you reptiles and insects, farewell . . . my friends, I despise you all, and trust to have forgotten you before I die.

PARIS, *October* 18*th*, 1854.

POSTSCRIPT.

LETTER to M. ——, accompanying the MSS. of my Memoirs, for the purpose of supplying him with Notes for my Biography.[1]

YOU wish to know the grounds for the opposition I have encountered in Paris as a composer for five-and-twenty years. They are many in number, but happily they have now partially disappeared.[2]

The kindly feeling of the whole press (always excepting the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, whose musical critic is a monomaniac, and whose editor honours me with his hatred), on the occasion of my latest work, *L'Enfance du Christ*, seems to prove the fact. In that work many people imagined that they could detect a radical change in my style and manner. This opinion is entirely without foundation. The subject naturally lent itself to a gentle and simple style of music, and for that reason alone was more in accordance with their taste and intelligence. Time would probably have developed these qualities, but I should have written *L'Enfance du Christ* in the same style twenty years ago.

[1] He took good care not to make use of them. His book is full of absurd anecdotes and extravagant eulogies.

[2] They have returned in full force, and the opposition is more inveterate than ever.

The principal reason for the long war waged against me lies in the antagonism existing between my musical feeling and that of the great mass of the Parisian public. Many looked upon me as a madman, because I considered them children or simpletons. All music deviating from the beaten track of the manufacturers of comic operas necessarily seems to these people the music of madmen, just as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and colossal Pianoforte Sonatas are to them the compositions of a lunatic.

In the next place, the professors of the Conservatoire were against me, stirred up by Cherubini and Fétis, whose self-love and faith had alike been rudely disturbed by my heterodoxy in the matter of harmony and rhythm. In music I am a sceptic, or, to speak more correctly, I belong to the religion of Beethoven, Weber, Gluck, and Spontini, who believed and proved through their works, that *everything is good* or that *everything is bad;* the effect produced by a combination being that which alone ought to sanction or condemn it. Nowadays, even those most obstinately bent on maintaining the authority of the old rules allow themselves more or less latitude in their works.

Among my adversaries were also the partisans of the Italian sensualist school, whose doctrines and whose gods I have often attacked and blasphemed.

I am more prudent now. I still abhor those operas which the public accept as masterpieces of dramatic art, though to my mind vile caricatures of passion and feeling; but I have acquired sufficient self-control not to speak of them. Still, my position as a critic continues to make me many enemies. And those who hate me most fiercely are not so often those whom I have blamed as those whom I have not praised or praised faintly. Others will

never forgive my jokes. Eighteen or twenty years ago I was imprudent enough to make fun of a very dull little work of Rossini's. It consists of three pieces, entitled, *La Foi, l'Espérance, et la Charité.* After hearing them, I said that "*his Hope had deceived ours, his Faith would never remove mountains, and as for his Charity, it would never ruin him.*" It is not difficult to imagine the fury of the Rossinists, although I had also written a long laudatory analysis of *Guillaume Tell*, and repeated *ad nauseam* that the *Barbiere* was one of the finest works of this century.

Panseron having sent me an absurd prospectus, announcing in very vulgar French the opening of a musical consulting office, where amateurs might have their songs corrected for the sum of a hundred francs, I published the affair in the *Journal des Débats*, including the prospectus in full, under the title of:

Consulting Office for Secret Melodies.

Some years ago M. Caraffa had an opera performed, entitled *La Grande Duchesse*, of which but two representations were given. Being obliged to give an account of the second, I confined myself to quoting Bossuet's celebrated words over Henrietta Maria of England: "*Madame se meurt. Madame est morte.*" M. Caraffa never forgave me.—I must confess, also, that I sometimes used words in the course of conversation which might fairly be taken for regular sword thrusts. One evening I was at D'Ortigue's house, with several others, among them M. de Lamennais and a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior; the conversation turned upon the discontent felt by everyone with his own circumstances. M. P——, the clerk, was not at all dissatisfied with his: "I would

rather be what I am," said he, "than anything else." "For my part," said I thoughtlessly, "I am not like you; I would rather be anything than what you are." My friend had sufficient self-command to make no retort, but I am quite sure that our roars of laughter, especially those of Lamennais, must have rankled in his heart.

For some years past I have had fresh enemies owing to my supposed superiority in conducting an orchestra. Nearly every conductor in Germany has been made my enemy through the players, owing to their extraordinary success under my baton, their too eager demonstrations and their careless expressions in my favour. It was the same in Paris for a long time. You will see in my memoirs[1] the effects of this kind of thing on Girard and Habeneck. In London, Costa does me secret injuries wherever he can.[2]

You will admit that I have had a fine phalanx to fight, without mentioning the singers or virtuosi, whom I always call to order when they take irreverent liberties with the music, nor the envious beings who are always ready to be exasperated at anything more brilliant than themselves.

And this life of combat is not without a certain charm when opposition has come down to reasonable proportions, as it has now. It is often pleasanter to smash through a gate than to jump it.

But this is the natural result of my passion for music—a passion which is always at white heat, and never satisfied for more than a moment or two. With this passion love of money has never, under any circumstances, anything to do; on the contrary, I had never any difficulty in

[1] [See chapters xlv. and xlvi.] [2] [More than doubtful.]

making any kind of sacrifice in pursuit of the beautiful, or in keeping clear of the miserable commonplaces which are the delight of the crowd. Offer me a fortune to compose some of the most popular works of the day, and I should refuse it without hesitation. It is my nature. It is not difficult to understand the position of such a temper as this, placed in an atmosphere like that of the musical world in Paris twenty years ago.

I should have no difficulty in sketching the reverse side of the picture, though it would be at the expense of modesty. The sympathy I have encountered in France, England, Germany, and Russia has consoled me for many troubles. I might even mention some very singular instances of enthusiasm, of which Paganini's royal gift, and the cordially artistic letter accompanying it, are no solitary examples.

But I will confine myself to repeating a charming saying of Lipinski's at Dresden three years ago. After a splendid performance of my *Faust*, Lipinski brought me a musician who wished to congratulate me, but did not know a word of French. As I was equally ignorant of German, Lipinski was about to act as interpreter, when he was interrupted by the artist himself, who rushes forward, takes me by the hand, stammers out some words, and bursts into a flood of tears. Lipinski then, turning to me and pointing to his friend's emotion, said simply: "You understand!"

I will quote another saying, quite antique in its turn. It was at Brunswick, where a selection from *Romeo and Juliet* was given in the theatre. On the morning before the concert a stranger,[1] sitting next me at the *table*

[1] The Baron von Donop, chamberlain to the Prince of Lippe-Detmold.

d'hôte, informed me that he had taken a long journey in order to hear my work.

"You should write an opera on that subject," said he. "From the way in which you have treated it as a symphony, and your evident sympathy with Shakespeare, you would do something marvellous in an opera."

"Alas!" I answered, "where am I to find artists capable of singing and playing the two principal parts? They don't exist; and even supposing they did, thanks to the musical manners and customs now prevalent in all the lyrical theatres, if I were to succeed in getting my work put into rehearsal I should certainly be dead before the first representation."

That evening my amateur went to the concert, and in conversation during the *entr'acte* repeated what I had said as to an opera. His neighbour was silent for a moment; then, violently striking the ledge of the box, he exclaimed: "Very well! Let him die! but let him write the opera!"

Allow me, my unknown friend, to assure you of my warm gratitude for your kind feeling towards me, and for your desire to avenge me (according to your own expression) on so much injustice. I believe that vengeance must be left to time. He is the great avenger, and the people and things of which I have so long had to complain are not worthy of your anger.

Hitherto I have said nothing of my manner of writing from the technical point of view; you may perhaps like a few details on the subject.

Generally speaking, my style is very bold, but it has not the slightest tendency to subvert any of the constituent elements of art. On the contrary, it is my endeavour to add to their number. I never dreamt of making music *without melody*, as so many in France are

found to say. Such a school exists in Germany, and I hold it in detestation. It is easy to see that, without confining myself to a short air for the theme of a piece, as the great masters often do, I have always taken care that my compositions shall be pervaded with rich melody. The value of the melodies, their distinction, novelty, and charm, may of course be disputed. It is not for me to estimate them, but to deny their existence is unfair and absurd. But as they are often on a very large scale, an immature or unappreciative mind cannot properly distinguish their forms; or they may be joined to other secondary melodies, which are invisible to that class of mind; and lastly, such melodies are so unlike the little absurdities to which that term is applied by the lower stratum of the musical world, that it finds it impossible to give the same name to both.

The prevailing characteristics of my music are passionate expression, intense ardour, rhythmical animation, and unexpected effects. When I say passionate expression, I mean an expression determined on enforcing the inner meaning of its subject, even when that subject is the contrary of passion, and when the feeling to be expressed is gentle and tender, or even profoundly calm. This is the sort of expression that has been discovered in the *Enfance du Christ*, the *Ciel* scene in the *Damnation de Faust*, and the *Sanctus* of the Requiem.

À propos to the Requiem, I will mention a class of ideas which I have been almost the only modern composer to deal with, and the mere import of which has entirely escaped the older writers. I refer to the enormous compositions which some critics have called architectural or monumental music, and which made Heine speak of me as a "colossal nightingale or gigantic lark; a creature of

the antediluvian world." "Berlioz's music," he continues, "has generally something primitive or primeval about it. It makes me think of vast mammoths or other extinct animals; of fabulous empires filled with fabulous crimes, and other enormous impossibilities. He is a magician, and he calls up Babylon, the hanging gardens of Semiramis, the marvels of Nineveh, the vast temples of Mizraim, as we see them in the pictures of Martin the Englishman."

In the same paragraph of his *Lutèce* he continues his comparison of me with the eccentric painter, and declares that I have *little melody* and *no simplicity*. Three weeks after the appearance of *Lutèce*, the first performance of the *Enfance du Christ* took place, and the next day I received a letter from Heine, written from his bed of suffering, in which he expresses his deep regret at having judged me so falsely. "*I hear on all sides*," he writes, "that your oratorio is a perfect bouquet of sweet flowers of melody, and masterpiece of simplicity. I shall never forgive myself for having been so unjust to a friend." I called on him, and as he was beginning again to blame himself I said: "But why did you act so like an ordinary critic in allowing yourself to express a positive opinion about an artist of whose works as a whole you know so little? You are always thinking of the *Sabbat*, the *Marche au Supplice*, the *Dies Iræ*, and the *Lacrymosa*. And yet I think I have done, and can do, things of a totally different character from those." The pieces which led Heine astray are exceptional, because they require exceptional methods. In the Requiem, for example, I employ four distinct brass orchestras, answering each other at certain distances round the main orchestra and chorus. In the *Te Deum*, the organ at one end of the church

answers the orchestra and two choirs at the other, whilst a third large choir represents the mass of the people, taking part from time to time in a vast sacred concert. But it is more especially the form of the pieces, the breadth of style, and the unusual extent and apparent vagueness of some of the progressions that give those works their strange gigantic physiognomy and colossal aspect. The result of this immensity of form is, that either one entirely misses the drift of the whole, or is crushed by tremendous emotion. At many performances of the Requiem I have seen one man listening in terror, shaken to the very depths of his soul, while his next neighbour could not catch an idea, though trying with all his might to do so. The latter was in the position of the tourists who go inside the statue of St. Carlo Borromeo at Como, and are afterwards told, to their surprise, that the room in which they have just been sitting is the inside of the saint's head.

My "architectural" works are: the *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale*, for two orchestras and chorus; the *Te Deum*, the *Judex crederis* of which is, without doubt, my greatest creation; the cantata with two choirs (*L'Impériale*), performed at the concerts in the Palace of Industry in 1855, and, above all, the Requiem. As for such of my compositions as are conceived on an ordinary scale, and require no exceptional means of execution, it is just their inward fire, their rhythmical expression, and originality, that are most injurious to them, on account of the kind of execution they demand. To render them properly, the performers, and especially the conductor, ought to *feel* as I do. They require a combination of extreme precision and irresistible *verve*, a regulated vehemence, a dreamy tenderness, and an almost morbid melancholy,

without which the principal features of my figures are either altered or completely effaced. It is therefore, as a rule, very painful to me to hear my compositions conducted by anyone but myself. I thought I should have had a fit when I heard the overture to *King Lear* conducted at Prague by a kapell-meister of indisputable talent. It was *all-but* right; but then, the *all-but* made it entirely wrong. You will see in the chapter on *Benvenuto Cellini*, how I suffered from Habeneck's unintentional mistakes, during the long protracted massacre of my work in rehearsal. [1]

If you ask me which of my pieces I prefer, my answer is that of most artists: the love-scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. One day, at Hanover, at the end of that piece, I felt myself pulled from behind; and turning round, found that the musicians round the desk were kissing my coat-tails. But I should take good care never to play that movement in certain rooms, or to certain audiences. . . .

With regard to French prejudice against me, I might also remind you of the story of the Shepherds' Chorus from *L'Enfance du Christ*, performed at two concerts under the name of Pierre Ducré, an imaginary composer of the eighteenth century. How its *simple melody* was praised! How many said: "Berlioz could never have written a thing like that!"

One evening in a drawing-room, a song bearing Schubert's name was sung to an amateur who was imbued with a pious horror of my music. "How good!" he exclaimed; "what melody, what feeling, clearness and sense! Berlioz could never have composed that!" It was Cellini's song in the second act of my opera.

[1] [Chapter xlviii.]

A *dilettante* once complained at a party that he had been humbugged in a most unpleasant way under the following circumstances :—

"I went one morning," he said, "to a rehearsal of the concert of Sainte-Cécile, conducted by M. Seghers. I heard a brilliant orchestral piece, extremely spirited, but differing essentially, both in style and instrumentation, from any symphony that I knew. I went up to M. Seghers, and said: 'What is that fascinating overture you have just been playing?'

"'That is the overture to the *Carnaval Romain*, by Berlioz.'

"'You will admit, certainly,' said one of my friends, cutting him short, 'that it is a shame to take in an honest man in that way.'"

In France, as elsewhere, I have been unanimously regarded as chief in the art of instrumentation, especially since the publication of my treatise on the subject. But I am accused of employing Sax's instruments; of course because I have often praised him as an able and skilful maker. But I have never employed them till now, except in one scene of the *Prise de Troie*, an opera of which no one has yet seen a single page. I have also been reproached with being excessively noisy, and with a love for the big-drum, which I only use in a very few pieces, where there is good reason for it. In fact, I alone, of all the critics, have obstinately protested, for twenty years past, against the revolting abuse of noise, and the senseless use of the big-drum, trombones, etc., in small theatres, small orchestras, small operas, and small songs, where even the tambourine is now employed.

Rossini, in the *Siege of Corinth*, was the man who really introduced noisy instrumentation into France; but

French critics never mention him in connection with this subject; nor ever reproach Auber, Halévy, Adam, and a score of others with their odious exaggerations; but they do reproach me and, more absurd still, Weber (see Michaut's *Life of Weber* in the *Biographie Universelle*)—Weber, who only employed the drum *once* in his orchestra, and used all instruments with matchless care and ability!

As far as I myself am concerned I think that the cause of this absurd mistake is due to my having been so often seen to conduct immense orchestras at the great festivals. For instance, Prince Metternich once said to me, at Vienna:

"Is it not you who compose music for five hundred musicians?"

To which I answered:

"Not always, monseigneur; I sometimes write for four hundred and fifty."

But what matter? my works are now published, and it is easy to check my statements. And, if not, still, what matter?

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

HECTOR BERLIOZ

PARIS, *May 25th*, 1858.

SUPPLEMENT.

The Institute—Concerts at the Palais de l'Industrie—Jullien—The Diapason of Eternity—*Les Troyens*—*Béatrice et Bénédict*—Excursion to Löwenberg—Concerts at the Conservatoire—Festival at Strasburg—Death of my Second Wife—Cemeteries—All wrong!

It is nearly ten years since I finished the foregoing memoirs, and these years have been nearly as eventful as those already described. Some account of them should therefore be given once and for all.

My career is ended—"Othello's occupation's gone." I compose no more music, conduct no more concerts, no longer write either prose or verse. I have resigned my post as critic. All my musical undertakings are finished; I have no desire to do anything more. And all I now do is to read, meditate, struggle against deadly weariness, and suffer ceaseless agonies from incurable neuralgia. To my great surprise I have been elected member of the Academy, and if my occasional speeches in my place there produce no result, I am at any rate on the most friendly, and even charming terms, with my colleagues.

I could tell many anecdotes of Gluck's *Orphée* and *Alceste*, which I was commissioned to produce at the

Théâtre Lyrique and the Opéra; but I have already said enough on this subject in my book, *À travers Chants*, and what there is to add, I prefer to keep to myself.

Through Prince Napoleon I received an offer to organise a huge concert in the Industrial Exhibition, on the day of the grand distribution of prizes by the Emperor. I accepted this hard task, at the same time declining all pecuniary responsibility. This was undertaken by M. Ber, a clever and enterprising contractor. He treated me with generosity; and on this occasion the concerts (for there were several more after the official ceremony) brought me in nearly eight thousand francs. I had placed twelve hundred musicians in a gallery behind the throne, where they were scarcely heard. But, on the day itself the musical effect was of so little importance that I was interrupted in the middle of the *Imperial* cantata which I had written for the occasion, and was forced to stop the orchestra at the most interesting point, because the Prince had to make his speech, and the music was too long. . . . The next day the paying public was admitted, and seventy-five thousand francs were taken. Meantime, we had lowered the orchestra, and arranged it at the bottom of the hall, where it produced an excellent effect. This time the cantata was not interrupted, and I got to the end of my grand musical firework. An engineer from Brussels constructed an electric metronome for me, with five branches. By the simple movement of one finger of my left hand, whilst using the baton with my right, I managed to mark the time at five distinct and distant points in the vast space occupied by the performers. Five deputy conductors received the time from me through the electric wires, and communicated it to the groups under their direction, and the general effect was marvellous.

Since then most of the lyrical theatres have adopted the electric metronome for the choruses behind the scenes, when their leaders can neither see the conductor nor hear the orchestra. The Opéra alone held out against it till the rehearsals of *Alceste*, when I insisted on the precious contrivance being adopted.

The effects produced at these concerts were very fine, especially in pieces where the harmony was broad and the *tempo* moderate, such as the chorus, *Jamais, dans ces beaux lieux*, from *Armide; Tibi omnes*, from my *Te Deum;* and the *Apothéose* from the *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale.*

Four or five years after this species of musical congress, Jullien, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the opera at Drury Lane, came to Paris to give a series of grand concerts in the circus at the Champs Élysées. His bankruptcy prevented him from signing the necessary engagements; but I was happy enough to obtain his certificate for him, and with it the power of contracting. The poor man, on seeing me thus give up my own claims on him, was so deeply moved as to embrace me, in the bankruptcy court, with a burst of tears. But from that moment his mind, which no one, either in London or Paris, would believe to be affected, went from bad to worse. For many years before, he had laid claim to an extraordinary discovery in acoustics, which he imparted to everybody. Putting a finger in each ear, he listened to the dull sound thus produced in the head by the blood passing through the arteries, and firmly believed that it was a colossal A produced *by the terrestrial globe revolving in space.* Then whistling a D, an E flat, or an F, he would exclaim enthusiastically:

"It is the A, the real A, the A of the spheres, the diapason of eternity!"

One day he came to me in great haste, with a very wild air. He had *seen God*, he said, *in a blue cloud*, and God had commanded him to make my fortune. The first step was to buy the score of *Les Troyens*, which I had lately finished, and for which he offered me thirty-five thousand francs. The next, spite of my resistance, was to pay off his Drury Lane debt. "I have money, I have money," he cried, taking handfuls of gold and bank-notes out of his pocket. "Look, look, there it is; pay yourself." I had great difficulty in making him take back his money, saying: "Another time, my dear Jullien, we will settle this affair, and see about the mission entrusted to you. For that you must be in a calmer condition than you now are." The fact was that he had already received considerable sums for his concerts at the Champs Élysées, from a contractor whom he had inspired with the greatest confidence. The following week, after having created a public scandal by playing the piccolo on the Boulevard des Italiens, in his cabriolet, and inviting the people in the street to his concerts, Jullien died raving mad. How many musicians are there at the present moment, just as mad as he, who are treated quite seriously!

At this time I had completed the dramatic work of which I have just spoken, and which is mentioned in a note to one of the preceding chapters. Four years previously I happened to be staying at Weimar with the Princess Wittgenstein, a devoted friend of Liszt's, a woman of rare intelligence and feeling, who has often comforted me in my fits of depression. Something led me to speak of my admiration for Virgil, and

an idea I had formed of a grand opera on the Shakespearian model, to be founded on the second and fourth books of the Æneid. I added that I was too well acquainted with the necessary difficulties of such an undertaking ever to attempt it. "Indeed," replied the Princess, "your passion for Shakespeare, combined with your love of the antique, ought to produce something grand and uncommon. You must write this opera, or lyric poem, or whatever you choose to call it. You must begin it, and you must finish it." I continued my objections, but she would hear none of them. "Listen," said she. "If you are shirking the inevitable difficulties of the piece, if you are so weak as to be afraid to brave everything for Dido and Cassandra, never come to see me again, for I will not receive you." This was quite enough to decide me. On my return to Paris, I began the poem of *Les Troyens*. I next attacked the score, and after three years and a half of corrections, changes, additions, etc., I finished it. While thus polishing and repolishing my work, after having read the poem to many different persons, and profited by their remarks to the best of my ability, I wrote the following letter to the Emperor.

"SIRE,

"I have just completed a grand opera, of which I have written both words and music. In spite of the boldness and variety of the means employed, the resources at our disposal in Paris are quite sufficient for its performance.[1] Permit me, Sire, to read you the book, and afterwards to entreat your patronage of the work,

[1] *Les Troyens* was not at that time divided into two operas; it formed a single one, lasting five hours.

if it is so fortunate as to deserve it. The theatre at the Opéra is now under the management of one[1] of my old friends, who entertains the most extraordinary opinions about my style in music—a style which he does not know and cannot appreciate. The two conductors under his orders are my enemies. Defend me, Sire, from my friend. As for my enemies, as the Italian proverb says, 'I can defend myself.' If your Majesty, after having heard my poem, does not judge it worthy of representation, I will accept your decision with sincere and unqualified respect; but I cannot submit my work to the estimation of persons whose judgment is obscured by prejudice, and whose opinion therefore is not of the slightest value to me. They would make the insufficiency of the poem a pretext for refusing the music. I was tempted for a moment to ask the favour of reading my libretto of *Les Troyens* to your Majesty during the leisure your Majesty enjoyed recently at Plombières, but the score was not then finished, and had the result proved unfavourable I might have been too much discouraged to proceed, though desirous of completing my great work with untiring ardour and the most assiduous and loving care. Now, let discouragement and trouble come if they will, nothing can destroy the fact that it is in existence. It is grand and powerful, and, in spite of the apparently complicated methods employed, very simple. Unfortunately, it is not vulgar, but this is a defect that your Majesty will pardon, and the Parisian public is beginning to understand that the highest aim of art does not consist in producing tricks of sound. Allow me therefore, Sire, to say, like one of the personages in

[1] Alphonse Royer.

the poem from whence I have taken my subject, *Arma cito properate viro!* I believe that I shall take Latium.

"With the most profound respect and devotion, I am, your Majesty's humble and obedient servant,

"Hector Berlioz,
"Member of the Institute.

"Paris, March 28th, 1858."

I did not take Latium. It is true that the people at the Opéra took good care not to *properare arma viro,* and the Emperor never read the letter, since M. de Morny dissuaded me from sending it. "The Emperor," he said, "would not have thought it *a proper one.*" And, finally, when *Les Troyens* was given after a fashion, his Majesty did not even condescend to come and see it.

One evening, at the Tuileries, I managed to have a moment's conversation with the Emperor, who authorised me to bring him the libretto, promising to read it if he could find an hour's leisure. But what leisure has the Emperor of the French? I sent my manuscript to his Majesty, who did not read it, and despatched it to the Office of the direction of theatres. There my work was slandered, and treated as absurd; a rumour was circulated that it would take eight hours, and require two companies, each as large as that of the Opéra, and three hundred extra singers, etc. A year later, however, they seemed disposed to have something to say to it. One day Alphonse Royer told me, from the Minister, that he was going to make them begin upon it at the Opéra, and wished to give me entire satisfaction.

This spontaneous promise was no better kept than all the rest, and from that time forth, etc.

And thus it happened that after a long and useless delay, tired of submitting to such annoyance, I yielded to M. Carvalho's entreaties, and consented to let him try to bring out *Les Troyens à Carthage*[1] at the Théâtre Lyrique, although it was manifestly impossible for him to do it justice. He had just obtained an annual subvention of a hundred thousand francs. But, in spite of this, the undertaking was beyond his powers; his theatre was not large enough, his singers not sufficiently skilled, his chorus and orchestra inadequate. We both made considerable sacrifices. I paid the musicians necessary to complete the orchestra out of my own pocket. More than once I even altered the scoring, in order to proportion it to his resources. Madame Charton-Demeur, the only woman who could sing Dido's part, treated me in a most generous and friendly manner, by accepting much less money from Carvalho than was offered her by the Madrid Theatre. In spite of everything, however, the performance was an imperfect one, as it could hardly fail to be. Madame Charton did admirably at times. Monjauze, as Æneas, was occasionally spirited and animated, but the *mise en scène*, which Carvalho insisted on arranging, was quite unlike what I had directed, and was absurd in some parts and ridiculous in others. At the first representation, the scene-shifter was nearly spoiling everything and upsetting the whole piece, by his awkwardness in the hunting scene. At the Opéra, this tableau would have produced a strikingly wild and beautiful effect; here it was contemptible, it took nearly an hour to make the change, and the result was that the whole scene was suppressed at the second representation.

[1] The second part of the entire work (*Les Troyens*) to which I added an instrumental introduction (*Le Lamento*) and a prologue.

I have already said that, in order properly to organise the performance of so great a work, I should have to be as absolutely master of the theatre as I am of the orchestra when rehearsing a symphony. I require the help of everybody, and must be obeyed by all without the slightest demur; otherwise, my energy is exhausted after a few days by the opposition, the puerile opinions, and still more puerile terrors by which I am beset. I end by resigning, and letting everything go to the devil. I cannot describe the way in which Carvalho, while protesting that he desired only to conform to my wishes, positively tortured me into giving my consent to the erasure of certain passages. When he dared not ask for these himself, he used to apply to me through our mutual friends. One would write me word that such and such a passage was dangerous; another implored me—also by letter—to suppress something else. And the criticisms were enough to drive me mad.

"Your rhapsodist with his four-stringed lyre is intended, I know, to account for the four notes struck by the harp in the orchestra. You wanted to show off a little archæology."

"Well?"

"That is dangerous. People will laugh."

"It certainly is a great matter for laughter. Ha! ha! ha! a tetrachord! An antique lyre, striking only four notes! ha! ha! ha!"

"There is one word in your prologue that alarms me."

"What is that?"

"The word *triomphaux*."

"And why should that alarm you? Is it not the plural of *triomphal*, as *chevaux* is of *cheval*, *originaux* of *original*, *madrigaux* of *madrigal*, *municipaux* of *municipal*?"

"Yes, but it is not a word in common use."

"By Jove! if I am only to employ words in use at the music-halls and vaudeville theatres for an epic subject, there will be a great many forbidden expressions, and the style of the work will be remarkably poor."

"People will laugh at it, you will see."

"Ha, ha, ha! *Triomphaux!* that is funny! *Triomphaux!* it is very nearly as ludicrous as *tarte à la crème* in Molière. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Æneas must not appear on the stage in a helmet."

"Why not?"

"Because Mangin, who sells pencils in the street, also wears a helmet; a helmet of the Middle Ages, certainly, but still a helmet; and the gods in the top gallery will begin to laugh and call out 'Mangin.'"

"Oh, of course, a Trojan hero must not wear a helmet, because people will laugh. Ha, ha, ha! a helmet! ha, ha! Mangin!"

"Look here, will you do me a favour?"

"Well, what now?"

"Suppress Mercury; the wings to his heels and head will make people laugh. No one has ever seen wings except on the shoulders."

"Oh! human beings have been seen with wings on their shoulders; I did not know that. But, however, I can understand that wings on the heels, and still more on the head, will make people laugh; ha, ha, ha! And so, as Mercury is not often to be found in the streets of Paris, let him be suppressed."

Who can understand what I underwent from these idiotic misgivings? I say nothing of Carvalho's musical ideas; he wanted me to alter the time of certain pieces, to add sixteen, eight, four bars here, or suppress two or

three there, to suit some *mise en scène* of his own contrivance. In his eyes, the *mise en scène* of an opera is not made for the music, but the music for the *mise en scène*. Just as if in writing my score I had not calculated on the resources of the Opéra, after studying them for forty years. The actors, at any rate, took care not to torment me, and I must do them the justice to say that they sang their parts just as I gave them, without changing a single note. This may seem incredible, but it is true, and I thank them. The first representation of *Les Troyens à Carthage* took place on the day promised, November the 4th, 1863. The work still required three or four serious general rehearsals; nothing went with certainty, particularly on the stage. But Carvalho was at his wits' end to keep up his *répertoire*, the house was empty every night, and he wanted to extricate himself from this unfortunate position as quickly as possible. Everybody knows that in such cases managers are ferocious. My friends and I expected a stormy evening and all sorts of hostile demonstrations, but nothing happened. My enemies dared not show themselves; a solitary hiss was heard at the end, when I was called for, and that was all. The individual who had hissed evidently determined to continue his insults, for he returned with a comrade, and hissed exactly at the same place at the third, fifth, seventh, and tenth performances. Others held forth in the lobbies with comical vehemence, saying that such music could not and ought not to be *allowed*. Five papers insulted me, in terms expressly chosen to wound my feelings as an artist. But on the other hand, more than fifty articles appeared during the first fortnight, in a tone of appreciative criticism, by Messrs. Gasperini, Fiorentino, D'Ortigue, Leon Kreutzer,

Damcke, Joannes Weber, and many others, written with an enthusiasm and ability that filled me with delight such as I had not felt for a long time past. Besides this I received a great many letters, some eloquent, others *naïf*, but all in earnest, and all touching me deeply.

I saw the people in tears at several of the performances, and during the two months following the first appearance of the piece, I was often stopped in the street by strangers asking permission to shake hands with me, and thanking me for having produced it. This was surely ample compensation for the insults of people whose enmity was due less to my criticisms than to my musical tendencies, and whose hatred, indeed, was such as to honour me. . . .

I confess that I was myself powerfully impressed when I heard certain pieces from the *Troyens* well performed. Æneas's song,

Ah! quand viendrâ l'instant des suprêmes adieux,

and still more, Dido's solo,

Je vais mourir,
Dans ma douleur immense submergée,

quite overcame me. Madame Charton rendered this passage in a grandly dramatic manner:

Enée, Enée,
Ah! mon âme te suit!

and shrieked in despair, as she struck her breast and tore her hair, just as Virgil intended.

Terque quaterque manu pectus percussa decorem
Flaventesque abscissa comas.

It is curious that not one of my howling critics should have reproached me with having presumed to create that vocal effect; and yet I think it is certainly worthy of their anger. Of all the passionately sad music I have ever

composed, I know nothing to compare to Dido's part in that scene and the following air, except those of Cassandra, in certain parts of the *Prise de Troie*, which have never yet been performed. . . .

Ah, my noble Cassandra, my heroic virgin, I must needs resign myself to never hearing thee! . . . And I am like the young Chorebus:

Insano Cassandræ incensus amore.

The following pieces were suppressed in *Les Troyens à Carthage* at the Théâtre Lyrique, both at rehearsal and after the first representation:

1. The entry of the builders.
2. That of the sailors.
3. That of the labourers.
4. Instrumental interlude (hunting scene and tempest).
5. Scene and duet between Anna and Narbal.
6. Second *air de ballet*.
7. The verses of Iopas.
8. The sentinels' duet.
9. The song of Hylas.
10. The grand duet of Æneas and Dido: *Errante sur tes pas*.

As for the first three of these, Carvalho thought the general effect cold; and the stage was too small for such processions. The *mise en scène* of the hunting interlude was wretched. Instead of a real waterfall, there was a painted one; the dancing satyrs were represented by little girls of twelve, and the blazing branches which they ought to have waved were forbidden for fear of fire; so were the nymphs who were to rush through the forest with dishevelled hair, crying "Italy!" The female chorus-singers were placed in the side-scenes, and could

not be heard in the theatre; the thunderbolt was scarcely audible, notwithstanding the weakness of the orchestra. After this contemptible parody, the scene-shifter took at least forty minutes to change the scenes. I myself therefore requested that the interlude might be suppressed. In spite of my furious resistance, Carvalho insisted on cutting out the scene between Narbal and Anna; and also the *air de ballet*, and the sentinels' duet, which seemed to him too familiar for the epic style. The verses of Iopas were omitted by my own advice, as the singer was incapable of doing them justice. In the duet between Æneas and Dido, I soon discovered that Madame Charton's voice was unequal to so violent a scene, and it fatigued her so much that she had not strength enough left to sing the terrible recitative in the fifth act, *Dieux immortels! il part!* and her last song and the scene of the funeral pile. Lastly, the song of Hylas, which took at the first performances, and was very well sung by young Cabel, disappeared whilst I was absent with an attack of bronchitis. Cabel was required for the piece played the day after *Les Troyens*, and as his engagement only bound him to sing fifteen times in the month, they had to pay him two hundred francs for each extra night. Carvalho therefore suppressed the song for the sake of economy, without giving me notice. I was so stupefied by this long torture that, instead of offering any further opposition, I consented to the suppression of several pieces in the piano score, which Carvalho wished should agree as nearly as possible with the representation. Happily the full score is not yet published. I spent a month in setting it to rights, and carefully dressing its wounds. It is to appear in its original form, exactly as I wrote it.

To see a work of that nature prepared for sale, with the erasures and trimmings of the publisher! Is there any torture like that? A score lying dismembered in the publisher's windows, like the body of a calf on a butcher's stall, with its fragments offered for sale like cat's-meat!

In spite, however, of all Carvalho's corrections and cuts, the *Troyens à Carthage* only ran twenty-one nights. As the receipts did not come up to his expectations, he consented to cancel the engagement of Madame Charton. She accordingly left for Madrid, and the work disappeared from the bills, to my great relief. My fees from these twenty-one representations were considerable, owing to my having written both words and music, and as I had disposed of the pianoforte arrangement both in Paris and London, I found to my intense delight that the interest of the sum total was about equal to my annual salary from the *Journal des Débats*. I therefore at once resigned my post as critic. At last, after thirty years' bondage, I am free! No more *feuilletons* to write, no more commonplaces to excuse, no more mediocrities to praise, no more indignation to suppress; no more lies, no more comedies, no more mean compromises—I am free! I need never again set foot in a lyrical theatre, nor speak of, nor listen to, nor even laugh at the queer medley of music produced there. *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.*

The *Troyens* was at any rate the means of releasing one wretched *feuilletoniste* from his bondage.

Between the completion and representation of the opera I wrote, by M. Benazet's[1] desire, both words and music of an *opéra comique* in two acts, *Béatrice et Bénédict*,

[1] Manager at Baden.

founded on Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. It was very successfully played, under my own direction, at the new Baden-Baden Theatre, August 9th, 1862. Some months later, at the request of the Grand-duchess, it was got up with equal success at Weimar, after being translated into German by Herr Richard Pohl. I was invited to conduct the first two performances, and overwhelmed, as usual, with all sorts of kind attention. The Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen was equally gracious, and sent his kapell-meister to me at Weimar to invite me to conduct a concert at Löwenberg, his present residence. He requested me to draw up an instrumental programme, consisting entirely of my own works, with which his orchestra was quite familiar.

"Monseigneur," I answered, "I am at your orders, but since your orchestra is familiar with my symphonies and overtures, will you kindly arrange the programme yourself, and I will conduct whatever you please?"

The Prince, therefore, chose the overture to *King Lear*, the banquet and love-scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, the overture to the *Carnaval Romain*, and the entire symphony of *Harold*. As the Prince had no harp, he extended his invitation to Madame Pohl, the Weimar harpist, and she and her husband took the journey very willingly.

The Prince was much changed since my trip to Hechingen in 1842, being such a martyr to gout that he could not leave his bed, and was not able even to attend the concert. This was a real grief to him, and he did not attempt to conceal it.

"You are not a conductor," he said, "you are the orchestra itself, and it is very hard that I cannot profit by your stay here."

He has had a fine concert-room built in the castle, excellent for sound, and there a select audience of sincere and erudite lovers of musical art assembles some ten or twelve times a year. The concerts are gratuitous, attended by people from the neighbourhood, and even from Burtzlau and Dresden, and a great many distant places. The orchestra contains only forty-five musicians, but I cannot describe their intelligence, attention, and good training, or the rare talent and patience with which they are directed by the conductor, Herr Seifrids. Moreover, they are not compelled to teach, and are not wearied either by church or theatre duty, but are entirely at the service of the Prince. I stayed in his house, and the first day of the rehearsal a servant came to tell me that "the orchestra was waiting." I went along a gallery, entered the concert-room for the first time, and there found the forty-five performers in silence, instrument in hand; no tuning up, no noise whatever—all were ready. On the principal desk was the score of *King Lear*. I lift my arm, I commence: all start together with *verve* and precision; the strong rhythmical eccentricities in the *allegro* are attacked without the slightest hesitation, and I say to myself as I conduct the overture—for the first time for ten or twelve years: "Why, it is overwhelming! Did I really write that?" It was the same with all the rest, and at last I said to the musicians, "This is a good joke, gentlemen, we are only rehearsing for amusement. I have no remarks to make."

The kapell-meister played the solo tenor in *Harold* to perfection, with a fine tone and a rhythmical *aplomb* that filled me with delight. Richard Pohl played the cymbals. I may truly say that I never heard a more fascinating performance. But, oh! the *adagio* from

Romeo and Juliet—how exquisitely they made it sing! We were at Verona, not at Löwenberg. . . . We played the piece without a single interruption, and, at the end, Herr Seifrids rose, stood silent for a moment, vainly striving to master his emotion, and then exclaimed: "No, there is nothing more beautiful."

Then the whole orchestra burst forth with shouts and applause on the violins, basses, drums. . . . I bit my lip. . . . Messengers from time to time passed to and from the sick room, describing the incidents of the rehearsal to the poor disconsolate Prince. The room was crowded on the day of the concert by a brilliant and impassioned audience; who had evidently long been familiar with all the pieces. After the *Pilgrims' March*, one of the Prince's officers mounted the platform, and, amid the applause of the whole audience, decorated me with the cross of the order of Hohenzollern. The secret had been so religiously kept, that I had not the slightest idea that I was to receive it. Accordingly I was greatly delighted, and played the orgie from *Harold* in my own frantic fashion, without a thought of the public—grinding my teeth throughout.

The next day the musicians gave me a grand dinner and a ball. I had to reply to a great many toasts, Richard Pohl serving as my interpreter, and reproducing my words in German, sentence by sentence.

I could say much more about this delightful trip, but will content myself with recalling the warm welcome I received from all the Prince's surroundings, more especially the family of Colonel Broderotti, one of his officers. I may add that both he and they spoke French with a grace that was beyond all value to me. I had to leave two days after the artists' ball, and the Prince, though still confined

to bed, embraced me at parting, saying: "Farewell, my dear Berlioz. You are going to your friends at Paris; tell them they are my friends too."

To return to the opera of *Béatrice*. I had taken the book from *Much Ado about Nothing*, and added the songs and the episode of the musician. The duet, *Vous soupirez, Madame!* the trio between Hero, Beatrice, and Ursula, *Je vais d'un cœur aimant*, and Beatrice's grand song, *Dieu! que viens-je d'entendre?* (which was sung at Baden by Madame Charton with feeling, *verve*, immense fire, and rare beauty of style), produced a tremendous effect. Critics, come expressly from Paris, praised the music warmly, especially the song and the duet. Some thought that there was a great deal of rubbish in the rest of the score, and that the spoken dialogue was stupid. It is copied almost word for word from Shakespeare.[1] . . .

This work is difficult of performance, especially in the men's parts; but I think it one of the most spirited and original I ever wrote. Unlike *Les Troyens*, its production entails no expense. However, they will take good care not to ask me to give it in Paris, and they will do well, for it is not Parisian music.

M. Benazet, with his usual generosity, paid me two thousand francs for the words of each act, and the same for the music; that is to say, eight thousand francs in all, and gave me an additional thousand for directing the performance the following year. The piano edition has been engraved, and the full score is shortly to be pub-

[1] [This is of a piece with the stories which Mendelssohn used to tell with so much gusto *à propos* to his *Midsummer Night's Dream* music. Some of the Berlin fashionables disputed whether the play were by Shakespeare or Tieck; and a very great personage condoled with Mendelssohn on having to waste his music on so stupid a drama.]

lished, with *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Prise de Troie*, and *Les Troyens à Carthage*, if I am rich enough. Choudens, when he purchased *Les Troyens*, gave me a written promise to publish the full score within a year; but this promise was no better kept than all the others, and from that time forth I never heard a word more about it, etc.

The duet in *Béatrice et Bénédict* is often sung in Germany,[1] and very popular. *À propos* thereto, I remember on my last visit to Weimar that the Grand-duke used sometimes to invite me to sup with him in private, and ask me numberless questions about my life at Paris and various other details. He was astonished and disgusted when I opened his eyes to the realities of our musical world. One evening, however, I made him laugh. He asked me when and where I had written *Vous soupirez, Madame.*

"You must surely have composed it by moonlight, in some romantic spot?"

"Monseigneur," said I, "it contains one of those impressions of nature that artists hoard up, and which burst forth afterwards from the soul when they are wanted, no matter where. I sketched it one day while listening to a speech from one of my colleagues at the Institute."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Grand-duke, "the orator must surely have been wonderfully eloquent."

The duet was also performed at one of the concerts at the Conservatoire, where it excited a most unexampled enthusiasm. It was encored with applause enough to bring down the house, and my faithful foes did not dare to utter a single hiss. It must be said also that

[1] [In England, too, it has been given, among other places, at the Crystal Palace more than once, and is a delightful piece.]

the singing of Mesdames Viardot and Vandenheufel-Duprez was simply delicious. The orchestra played with marvellous grace and delicacy, and it was a performance that one sometimes hears . . . in one's dreams.

The Concert Society was kind enough this year to do the second part of my sacred trilogy, *L'Enfance du Christ*. It was admirably performed, and also produced a great effect, but the public, for some reason or other, departed from its usual habit of encoring *Le Repos de la Sainte Famille*, and my opponents condescended to insult the room by a few hisses. The Conservatoire is now under the direction of my friend, M. Georges Hainl; it has ceased its hostilities, and occasionally performs my pieces. I have made over to it all the music in my possession, separate orchestral and choral parts, engraved and MS., containing all that is necessary for a grand performance of every one of my works, the operas alone excepted. This musical library will be of great value by-and-by; meantime, it could not possibly be in better hands.

I must not forget the Strasburg festival, to which I was invited a year and a half ago, to direct the performance of *L'Enfance du Christ*. A huge hall had been built to accommodate six thousand persons and five hundred performers. One would have supposed that this oratorio, being in a uniformly soft and tender style, would have been almost inaudible in so vast a room. To my astonishment it aroused profound emotion, and the unaccompanied chorus at the end, *O mon âme*, drew tears from many. I am happy when I see my audience weep.[1]

[1] [This is the exact opposite of Beethoven's feeling. At the end of one of his improvisations, when everyone was dumb with weeping, he rose and stormed. "An artist does not want tears," said he, "he wants applause; that is what stimulates him."]

It produces nothing like the same effect in Paris. But then it is very badly performed there.

I hear that during the past year several of my works have been played in America, Russia, and Germany; so much the better. My musical career will become all that I could wish by the time I am a hundred and forty!

I married again . . . I was *obliged* to do so; and after eight years my second wife died suddenly from heart disease. Some months after her interment in the great Montmartre cemetery, my friend Edward Alexandre, the maker of the Alexandre organs, who has always treated me with the most unfailing kindness, thinking her tomb too unpretending, insisted on purchasing the freehold of a piece of ground for me and my family. A vault was built, and I was compelled to be present at the removal of my wife's remains to her new resting-place. It was a terribly sad moment, and I suffered keenly; but it was nothing in comparison of what fate had reserved for me. My experiences in this respect were destined to be terrible. Soon afterwards I received an official notice that the smaller cemetery at Montmartre, where my first wife, Henrietta Smithson, was buried, was about to be abolished, and that I must remove her loved remains.

I gave the necessary orders in both cemeteries, and one dark, gloomy morning set forth alone for the sad spot. A municipal officer was waiting, to be present at the disinterment. The grave had already been opened, and on my arrival the gravedigger jumped in. The coffin was still entire, though it had been ten years underground; the lid alone was injured by the damp. The man, instead of lifting it out, tore away the rotten lid, which cracked with a hideous noise, and brought the contents of the

coffin to light. He then bent down, took up the head, which was already parted from the trunk—the bald, uncrowned, decayed head of the *poor Ophelia*—and laid it in a new coffin awaiting it at the edge of the grave. . . .

The municipal officer stood a few feet off, looking at the sad spectacle. Seeing me leaning against the trunk of a cypress, he called out: "Don't stay there, M. Berlioz; come here, come here!" And as though something grotesque were to be added to the horrible scene, he added, with a mistake in the word: "Ah, poor *inhumanity!*"

A few moments later we followed the hearse down the hill to the new vault in the larger Montmartre cemetery. There both the dead sleep tranquilly, awaiting the time when I myself shall be brought to the same charnel-house of corruption. . . .

I am in my sixty-first year; I have neither hopes, nor illusions, nor great thoughts left. My son is nearly always absent; I am solitary. My contempt for the folly and meanness of men, my hatred of their detestable ferocity, are at their height, and I say hourly: "When death wills!"

Why does it delay?

THE LAST CHAPTER OF ALL.

Visit to Dauphiny—Second Pilgrimage to Meylan—A Day at Lyons—I see Madame F—— again—Convulsions of heart.

Seldom have I been more dreadfully depressed than I was in the early part of September, 1864. Most of my friends had left Paris, according to custom. Stephen Heller alone remained—at once a charming humorist and a learned musician, who has written so many admirable pianoforte works, and whose melancholy spirit and zeal for the true divinities of art have always had a powerful attraction for me.

Fortunately, my son arrived from Mexico and was able to spare me a few days. He also was in low spirits, and we three often compared notes on our melancholy. One day we dined at Asnières. Towards evening, as we walked along the banks of the Seine and talked of Shakespeare and Beethoven, I remember we got into a state of immense excitement, in which my son only shared as far as Shakespeare was concerned, being then unacquainted with Beethoven. We all agreed finally, however, that it was good to be alive, to worship the beautiful, and that, if we could not destroy its opposite, we must rest satisfied with despising and forgetting it.

The sun was setting. After walking for some time,

we sat down on the grassy bank of the river, opposite the island of Neuilly. We amused ourselves by watching the swallows skimming along the water, when I suddenly recognised the spot. I looked at my son . . . I thought of his mother. Thirty-six years before, in one of my fits of despair while wandering about Paris,[1] I had thrown myself down in the snow on this very spot, and all but fallen asleep. Then I recollected Hamlet's cold speech, when told that the funeral was that of Ophelia, no longer beloved: "What! the *fair Ophelia?*" "One winter's day, ages ago," I said to my two companions, "I was very nearly drowned just here, in trying to cross the Seine on the ice. I had been wandering aimlessly about the fields all day." . . .

Louis sighed.

The following week he had to return, his leave being up. A sudden and intense desire seized me to revisit Vienne, Grenoble, and especially Meylan and my nieces, and . . . someone else, if I could find out her address.

I had written the day before, and I started accordingly. My brother-in-law and his two daughters met me at the Vienne station, and soon brought me to Estressin, a place some distance off in the country, where they spend three or four months every summer. It was a great delight to these charming girls, one of whom was nineteen and the other twenty-one; but their pleasure was somewhat troubled when I went into the drawing-room of the house at Vienne and there caught sight of the picture of their mother, my sister Adèle, who had been dead four years. It upset me terribly, and my emotion was witnessed with painful surprise both by them and their father. To *them*, the room, the furniture,

[1] [See vol. i. p. 91.]

and the portrait had been long familiar, long habit had, alas! dimmed their recollection; time had done its work.

Poor Adèle! What a heart she had, and what kindly indulgence for all my asperities of temper, even for my most trifling whims! . . .

One morning, when we were all together at the Côte St. André, after my return from Italy, it was pouring with rain; and I said to her:

"Adèle, will you come out for a walk?"

"Willingly, dear; just wait till I put on my goloshes."

"Look at those two lunatics," said my eldest sister; "isn't it like them to go and paddle about the country in such weather?"

However, I took a large umbrella, and Adèle and I, paying no attention to the jeers of the family, went down into the plain, and walked arm-in-arm for five or six miles, under the umbrella, without saying a word. We did love one another.

I passed a very quiet fortnight with my nieces and their father. I had begged my brother-in-law to find out all he could about Madame F—— at Vienne, and to get her address at Lyons. This he succeeded in doing. Being unable, therefore, to restrain myself any longer, I started at once for Grenoble, and from thence turned my steps towards Meylan, as I had done sixteen years before.

A kind of secret impatience made me hasten my steps. There is old St. Eynard already lifting its half-uncovered head above the other mountains on the horizon. Again I shall behold the small white house with its surroundings, and to-morrow—to-morrow! . . . I shall be at Lyons, and I shall see Estelle herself. Can it be possible?

Once at Meylan, I did not lose my way this time in climbing up the mountain, and soon found the fountain, the avenue of trees, and the house. Everything was as perfect to me as if I had been there only the day before. It is but sixteen years ago. I pass before the avenue, and press on to the tower, without a glance behind me. Luxuriant vegetation covered the neighbouring hills, the vines were spreading out their ripe branches. On reaching the foot of the tower, I turned as before, and took in the whole of the lovely valley at a glance. Hitherto I had contented myself with murmuring, in a low voice, "Estelle! Estelle! Estelle!" but now, overwhelmed by emotion, I fell to the ground, and there lay for a long time, listening with a mortal sadness to the echoes in my brain which at each pulsation seemed to say: The past! the past! Time! Never! never! . . . never!

I arose, I snatched a stone from the tower wall which must have seen *her*, which perhaps *she* had touched; I tore off a branch from the oak. On my way down I recognised in the corner of a field, the rock so anxiously sought for in 1848, on which she had once stood. Yes, there it was!

I ascend it; my feet stand where hers once stood! no doubt of it—I fill the space once occupied by her lovely form. I bear away a tiny fragment from my granite altar.

But the sweet peas! this cannot be their season for flowering, or else they have been destroyed, for my search for them is vain. But there is the cherry tree; how it has grown! I take a piece of the bark; I embrace the trunk, and press it convulsively to my heart! Beautiful tree! thou must surely remember her; thou canst understand me.

Having descended the hill without meeting a soul on the way, I suddenly made up my mind at the avenue gate to go in and see the house and garden. The present owners will hardly think me a burglar. And if they do! I enter the garden. An old lady makes a sudden movement of alarm at my unexpected appearance round one of the alleys.

"Excuse me, madame," I murmured almost inaudibly, "and kindly allow me . . . to visit . . . your garden; it . . . recalls . . . memories."

"Pray come in, and walk about where you please."

"Oh, I only want to go once round."

A few paces farther on I came upon a young girl mounted on a ladder, gathering pears. I bowed as I passed. I crossed a wilderness of shrubs that almost stopped my way, such is the state of dilapidation to which the little garden is reduced. I cut a branch of syringa, which I hid in my breast, and came away. As I passed before the open door, I stopped for a moment on the threshold to look in. The young lady followed me; she had come down from her pear tree, and had doubtless heard from her mother of my absurd visit. She accosted me with courtesy, and said:

"Pray come in."

"Thanks, mademoiselle; I accept your kind offer."

And there I was at last in the little room looking out on the plain below, from which *she* had pointed out to me, then a boy of twelve, the beauties of the romantic valley. Everything was just as it had been; the drawing-room close by had the old furniture. I gnawed my pocket-handkerchief in my agitation. The young lady looked at me in some alarm.

"Do not be astonished, mademoiselle; it is forty-nine

years since I saw these things." . . . And I made my escape sobbing. What could the ladies have thought of this strange scene, the significance of which they will never understand?

He has said this before, says the reader. Too true. The same memories and regrets, the same yearning towards the past, the same pitiable eagerness to retain the ever-flying present, the same useless struggles with time, the same madness in attempting to realise the impossible, the same imperative craving for boundless affection. How should I *not* repeat myself? The sea repeats herself; all her waves are alike. . . .

That same evening I was at Lyons. I passed a strange sleepless night, musing over my intended visit to Madame F——. I determined to go to her house at twelve o'clock. Whilst awaiting the hour, which seemed as if it would never arrive, and thinking it very possible that she might not at first wish to receive me, I wrote the following letter for her to read before hearing the name of her visitor:

"I have been again at Meylan. This second pilgrimage to the spot haunted by the dreams of my childhood was even more painful than that which I made sixteen years ago, when I ventured to write to you. Now I venture still further, and ask you to receive me. You will have nothing to fear from the emotions of a heart revolted by the restraint of a pitiless reality. I shall know how to control myself. Spare me a few moments. I implore you to let me see you once again.

"Hector Berlioz.

"September 23rd, 1864."

I could not wait till twelve o'clock. At half-past eleven I rang at her door, and gave the letter to her maid, together with my card. She was at home. To give the letter would have been all that was necessary; but I did not know what I was doing. On seeing my name, however, Madame F—— at once ordered me to be shown in, and came out to meet me. I recognised the divine stateliness of her step; but, oh heavens! how changed she was! her complexion faded—her hair gray. And yet at the sight of her my heart did not feel one moment's indecision; my whole soul went out to its idol, as though she were still in her dazzling loveliness. She leads me into her sitting-room, holding my letter in her hand. I can neither breathe nor speak. Then, with a sweet dignity:

"We are very old acquaintances, M. Berlioz." . . .

Silence.

"We were two children." . . .

Silence.

At length the dying man recovers his speech.

"Pray read my letter, madame, it . . . will explain my visit." . . .

She opens and reads it, then laying it upon the chimney-piece:

"You have been at Meylan again! No doubt it was a chance visit? You did not take the journey on purpose?"

"Can you suppose I was there by chance? No, indeed! I have long wished to see it again."

Silence.

"You have had a very eventful life, M. Berlioz."

"How do you know, madame?"

"I have read your biography."

"Which?"

"By Méry, I think. I bought it some years ago."

"Oh, do not attribute to Méry, who is one of my friends, and a clever artist and a clever man, such a pack of absurdities. There shall be a true biography of me; I will write it myself."

"Ah, no doubt! You write so well."

"It was not to my style that I was alluding, madame, but to the correctness and sincerity of my story. As for my feelings towards yourself, I have spoken of them without reserve; but I have not mentioned your name."

Silence.

"I have also," continued Madame F——, "heard much about you from one of your friends who married a niece of my husband's."

"Indeed! I asked him to find out the fate of the letter which I made bold to write to you sixteen years ago. I wanted at least to know if you had received it. But I never saw him again. He is now dead, and I could learn nothing."

Silence.

Madame F——: "As for my life, it has been very simple and very sad. I have lost several of my children. The others I have educated. My husband died when they were quite little. . . . I have done my duty as a mother as best I could."

Silence.

"I was much touched, M. Berlioz, by the feelings you avowed for me, and most grateful."

At these kind words, my heart began to beat violently. I gazed at her with hungry eyes, beholding anew in my imagination her vanished youth and beauty; and at last I said:

"Give me your hand, madame."

She gave it to me immediately. I carried it to my lips, and I thought I could feel my heart melting, and every nerve thrilling.

"May I hope," said I, after a long silence, "that you will sometimes allow me to write to you, and occasionally to visit you?"

"Certainly; but I shall not be much longer at Lyons. One of my sons is going to be married, and I am to live with him at Geneva."

Not daring to prolong my visit further, I arose. She accompanied me to the door, where she said once more:

"Farewell, M. Berlioz, farewell. I am deeply grateful for the feelings you have preserved towards me."

And bowing to her, I again took her hand, laid it for a few moments against my forehead, and then tore myself forcibly away.

I was wandering about the neighbourhood of her house, now knocking up against the trees of the Brotteaux, now stopping to watch the stormy course of the Rhone from the Morand bridge, then resuming my fevered walk, not knowing why I went to one side rather than the other, when I met M. Strakosch, brother-in-law to Adelina Patti.

"Berlioz! how fortunate! Adelina will be delighted to see you. She is giving performances here. Would you like a box for the *Barber of Seville* to-morrow night?"

"Thanks, but I shall probably be leaving this evening."

"Well, at any rate, come and dine with us to-night; you know how pleased we always are to see you."

"I can't promise, it will depend. . . . I am not very well. . . . Where are you stopping?"

"At the Grand Hotel."

"So am I. Well, if I am not too unsociable this evening, I will dine with you, but don't expect me."

I had got an idea, a pretext for seeing Madame F—— once more. I hastened to her house, and learnt that she had just gone out. Then I charged her maid to tell her that I had a box for the theatre on the following evening, that if Madame F—— would kindly accept it, and come and hear Mdlle. Patti, I would stay at Lyons, and have the honour of accompanying her to this performance, but that otherwise I should leave this very evening; that I therefore begged she would let me have an answer before six o'clock. I went home. Twenty minutes passed, in which I vainly tried to read a book of travel I had bought at Grenoble. Not a word of it could I understand. I walked about my room. I threw myself on my bed. I opened the window. I went down, and going out soon found myself before the door of her house, No. 66, Avenue de Noailles. I had gone there mechanically. I could restrain myself no longer, and again I rang the bell. The door was not opened. A gloomy idea immediately began to torment me; had she suspected my intentions of returning, and denied herself to me? It was an absurd notion, but it tortured me notwithstanding. An hour afterwards I came back, and this time I sent the porter's little boy to ring Madame F——'s bell.

He was not let in either.

What was to be done? Stay there on guard before the house? It would have been ridiculous. How unlucky! Where was I to go?—home?—into the Rhone? . . . Perhaps she is really out, and does not want to avoid me.

An hour later, I again mounted her staircase. I heard her door closing above, and the sound of women's voices in German. I continued to ascend; I met an unknown lady coming down, then a second, and finally a third. It was she, holding a letter in her hand.

"Oh, M. Berlioz, you have come for an answer."

"Yes, madame."

"I had written to you, and was just going with these ladies to leave my note at the Grand Hotel. Unhappily, I cannot accept your kind invitation, for I have an engagement in the country, and must start at twelve o'clock. I beg you a thousand pardons for having kept you waiting so long, but I have only just come in and heard of your offer."

As she made a movement to put the letter in her pocket I exclaimed: "Pray give it to me."

"Oh, but it is not worth while."

"I entreat you; you meant it for me."

"Very well, there it is."

She gave me the letter, and I saw her handwriting for the first time.

"Then I shall not see you again?" said I, when we were in the street.

"You leave this evening?"

"Yes, madame. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, and a pleasant journey."

I pressed her hand, and saw her depart with the two German ladies.

And then—will it be believed?—I felt almost joyful; I had seen her a second time, I had spoken to her again, once more I had pressed her hand, and I had had a letter from her which she ended by assuring me of her *affectionate feelings*. It was an unlooked-for treasure, and I turned my steps towards the hotel in the hope of dining pretty quietly with Mdlle. Patti. On seeing me enter the salon, she uttered a cry of delight, clapping her hands like a child.

"Oh, how delightful! there he is! there he is!" And

the fascinating *diva* rushed up to me after her usual fashion, and presented her virgin forehead to be kissed. I sat down to table with her, her father, her brother-in-law, and some friends. During dinner she overwhelmed me with charming civilities, continually repeating: "There's something the matter with him. What are you thinking about? I don't like you to be in trouble." When the hour for my departure arrived, they determined to go down with me to the station; the charming creature herself, one of her lady friends, and her brother-in-law, came with me in the carriage. We were all allowed on to the platform. Adelina would not leave me till the last moment, when the signal was given for the train to start. When we had to part, the mad girl jumped up and put her arms round my neck.

"Good-bye, good-bye till next week. We shall be returning to Paris on Tuesday; you will come and see us on Thursday. It's settled, isn't it? You won't fail?"

And so I departed.

What would I not have given to receive such marks of affection from Madame F——, and to have been greeted by Mdlle. Patti with cold politeness! . . .

During all these gushing speeches from the melodious Hebe, I felt as if a marvellous bird of paradise were whirling round my head, perching on my shoulder, pecking at my hair, and singing its gayest songs. I was dazzled, but not touched. The fact was I had no *love* for the young, beautiful, radiant, and celebrated artist who, at the age of twenty-two, had brought all the musical world of Europe and America to her feet; whereas my whole soul went out to the aged, saddened, and obscure woman, to whom art was unknown, as it had ever done, ever will do to my dying day.

Balzac, nay, Shakespeare himself, the great painter of the passions, never dreamt of such a thing as this. Only one poet, Thomas Moore, believed that it was possible, and described that rare feeling in these exquisite lines, which recur to my mind as I write:

Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms
Like fairy-gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will;
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofan'd by a tear,
That the fervour and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear;
No, the heart that has truly lov'd never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turn'd when he rose.

How many times during that sad night in the train I repeated to myself: "Fool! why did you go away? Better to have stayed. If you had stayed, you would have seen her again to-morrow morning. What necessity was there to go back to Paris?" None, of course, except the fear of being troublesome. . . . What should I have done at Lyons during those long hours when, though only a few steps away, I could not see her? It would have been torture.

After some days of misery in Paris, I wrote her a letter. It will be seen by it, and those which follow, no less than by her answers, what a wretched state my mind was in, and how calm she was. My feelings, now that I have not even the consolation of writing to her,

may be easily imagined. It would have been too sweet an ending to my life to have cultivated this futile love into a romantic friendship. But I was to be crushed and lacerated to the very end.

FIRST LETTER.

"Paris, September 27th, 1864.

"MADAME,

"Your greeting was characterised by a simple and dignified kindliness of which few women would have been capable under such circumstances. A thousand blessings on you! Nevertheless, I have suffered cruelly since I left you. In vain do I tell myself that nothing could have been kinder than your reception, that any other would have been either unsuitable or inhuman; my wretched heart bleeds as though it had been wounded. I ask myself the reason, and this is what I find: It is *absence;* it is that I saw too little of you, that I did not say a quarter of what I had to say, and that I went away almost as though there were to be an eternal separation between us. And yet you gave me your hand—I pressed it to my forehead and my lips, and I restrained my tears, as I had resolved to do. But I feel an imperious, inexorable necessity for further speech with you, which I hope you will not refuse me. Remember that I have loved you for forty-nine years, that I have loved you from childhood, notwithstanding the storms that have devastated my life. The proof of this is the deep emotion I now feel; if it had really ceased to exist, even for a day, it could never have revived under existing circumstances.

"Has any woman ever listened to such a declamation as this? Don't take me for a fool who is the sport of his imagination. I am not a fool; I am gifted with a keen

sensitiveness, combined, believe me, with great quickness of insight. But my true affections are intensely powerful, and of an unalterable constancy. I have loved you, I still love you, I shall always love you. And yet I am sixty-one years of age. I know the world, and have no illusions left. Grant me then—not as a sister of charity ministering to a sick man, but as a noble-hearted woman healing the sorrows of which she is the unconscious cause—the three things which alone can restore my peace of mind: permission to write to you occasionally, an assurance that my letters shall be answered, and a promise that you will invite me to visit you at least once a year. My visits might be inopportune, and therefore troublesome, if they were made without your permission, and so I will never go either to Geneva or elsewhere unless you write the word 'Come.'

"Who could find anything unsuitable or odd in this? What can be more pure than such a relationship? Are we not both free? Who could be heartless or senseless enough to blame us? No one, not even your sons, who are, as I know, most distinguished young men. I must, however, confess that it would be dreadful to see you only in the presence of others. If you bid me come, I must be able to converse with you as I did at our first interview last Friday—an interview which I dared not prolong, and which I could not enjoy because of my terrible efforts to restrain my emotions.

"Oh! madame, madame, I have but one aim left in the world—that of obtaining your affection. Suffer me to try and attain it. I will be discreet and reserved; our correspondence shall not be more frequent than you desire. It shall never become a wearisome task to you; a few lines from your hand will suffice. My visits can only be

few and far between, but I shall know that in thought we are no longer apart, and that after the many years in which I have been nothing to you, I have at last the hope of becoming your friend. And a devoted friend such as I shall be is rare. I shall surround you with tenderness profound and sweet, and with an entire affection in which the innocent effusion of the child will mingle with the feelings of the man. Perhaps you will find some charm in it, perhaps you will one day say, 'I am your friend,' and admit that I am deserving of your friendship.

"Farewell, madame; I have just re-read your note of the 23rd, and at the end I perceive the assurance of your affectionate sentiments. This is not a commonplace formality, is it?—is it?

"Yours eternally,

"Hector Berlioz.

"P.S.—I am sending you three books; perhaps you will not mind looking at them in your spare moments. You understand it is a pretext of the author's to lead you to think a little of him."

FIRST ANSWER FROM MADAME F——.

"Lyons, September 29th, 1864.

"Monsieur,

"I should feel guilty towards both myself and you if I did not at once reply to your last letter, and to your dream of the relation which you wish to establish between us. I am going to speak—my hand on my heart.

"I am but an old, a very old woman, six years older than you; my heart is withered by days of anguish, physical and mental distress of all sorts, which have left

me without illusions as to the joys and sentiments of this world. Twenty years have passed since I lost my best friend. I have sought no other; only kept up such as arose from old relationships and natural family ties, since the fatal day on which I was left a widow. I have said good-bye to all pleasures and amusements, in order to devote myself entirely to my children and my home. This has been my life for the past twenty years; it has become a habit with me, the charm of which cannot now be broken, for in such close intimacy alone can I find peace for the few days remaining to me on this earth, and everything that troubled their uniformity would be painful and burdensome.

"In your letter of the 27th, you tell me that your only wish is to become my friend through an interchange of letters. Do you seriously think that this is possible? I scarcely know you. I saw you for a few minutes last Friday, the first time for forty-nine years. I cannot, therefore, rightly estimate either your tastes, your temper, or your qualities, which alone can form a foundation of friendship. When two individuals have the same way of feeling and seeing things, there is a possibility of sympathy between them; but when they are separated, correspondence alone cannot establish what you look for from me. For my part, I believe it to be impossible. Besides, I must confess that I am extremely lazy about writing; my mind is as inert as my fingers. I have the greatest difficulty in fulfilling even my most necessary duties in this respect. I could not, therefore, promise to keep up a sustained correspondence with you. I should break my promise too often. I forewarn you. If you like to write to me sometimes, I shall receive your letters, but do not look for exact or speedy answers.

"You also wish me sometimes to ask you to come and see me. That is no more possible than to say, 'You will find me alone.' On Friday I chanced to be alone when I received you; but when I shall be living with my son and his wife at Geneva, if I am by myself when you come, well and good; but if they are with me at the time, you will have to put up with their presence, for I should be extremely displeased if it were otherwise.

"I have told you my thoughts and feelings with perfect frankness. I think I ought to remind you that there are certain dreams and illusions which should be abandoned when we come to white hairs, and with them to the disenchantment of all fresh feelings, even those of friendship, which can have no charm unless they are the result of relations established in the happy days of youth. To my mind, it is not a moment for beginning them when the weight of years is beginning to be felt, and when their number has taught us how easy it is to be deceived. I confess that I have arrived at that point. The future is daily advancing. Why form relations to be born to-day and perish to-morrow? Why give occasion to fresh regrets?

"In all that I have just said, do not think I have any intention of offending against your remembrance of me. I respect its persistency, and am much touched by it. You are still very young in heart, but with me it is otherwise. I am altogether old. I am good for nothing, except to keep, believe me, a large place in my memory for you. I shall always hear of your future triumphs with pleasure. Farewell, monsieur. Again I sign myself affectionately yours,

"Est. F——.

"I received the three volumes you so kindly sent me yesterday morning. Many thanks for them."

SECOND LETTER.

"Paris, October 2nd, 1864.

"MADAME,

"Your letter is a masterpiece of sad reason. I waited till to-day to answer it, in the hope of being able to master the overwhelming emotion it created in me.

"Yes, you are right. You cannot form new friendships. You must avoid everything that can trouble your existence, etc. But, believe me, I would not have troubled it, and the friendship for which I asked so humbly at some more or less distant period, would never have become *burdensome* to you. (You will admit that that word in your letter must have seemed to me cruel!) I am content with what you deign to bestow on me, *some affectionate feeling, a place in your memory, and a little interest in the events of my career*. I thank you, madame. I put myself at your feet. I kiss your hands respectfully. You tell me that sometimes, at long and uncertain intervals, I may expect an answer to my letters. I thank you again for your promise. What I urge with tears and entreaties is to be allowed to have news of you. You speak with such courage of years and old age that I dare to imitate you. I hope to die first, that I may be able with certainty to send you a last farewell. If it should be otherwise, let me be told that you have left this sad world. Let your son tell me—and forgive me for the request. My letters must not be addressed at hazard. Give me what you would not deny to any stranger—your address at Geneva.

"I shall not go and see you this month at Lyons; it is plain that you would think such a visit an indiscretion. Neither will I go to Geneva for at least a year; the fear of troubling you will restrain me. But your address!

your address! As soon as you know it send it to me, for pity's sake. If your silence be meant as pitiless refusal, a formal prohibition of the very slightest intercourse with you, if you thus roughly thrust me aside as though I were dangerous or unworthy, you will put the finishing touch to a sorrow which you might so easily have alleviated. Then, madame, may God and your own conscience forgive you! I shall remain in the cold darkness into which you will have plunged me, suffering, desolate, and devoted to you till death.

"HECTOR BERLIOZ."

(What contradictions and disorder there are in this letter!)

MADAME F——'S SECOND ANSWER.

"Lyons, October 14th, 1864.

"MONSIEUR,

"As I do not know when I shall be able to write to you, I hasten to send you a few lines, so that you may not think I have any intention of treating you as either *dangerous or unworthy*. My son is coming to me to-morrow, to be married on the 19th, and my house will be full for some days. As his mother and as mistress of the house, I shall have a great many things to do, and shall not therefore find it possible to get a moment's peace or leisure. Immediately after the marriage I must make preparations for my journey to Geneva, which will not be by any means a light undertaking for me, as my health does not always allow me to do what I should like. I shall leave about the beginning of November, and when I am settled in my new home you shall have my address, which I cannot give you to-day, because I do not know

it myself. I would have waited for my son's arrival to ascertain it, did I not fear that you might misinterpret my long silence.—Affectionately yours,

"Est. F——."

THIRD LETTER.

"Paris, October 15th, 1864.

"Madame,

"I thank you, I thank you. I will wait. My best wishes for the happiness of the newly married pair. Dear madame, may the sweetest happiness fill your heart at this solemn moment. How good you are!

"Do not doubt me. I shall be discreet in my adoration.—Ever your devoted,

"Hector Berlioz."

After twelve weary days, I received a letter announcing the marriage of M. Charles F——. The address was in his mother's handwriting, which filled me with a delight that few will understand. I was in the seventh heaven, and wrote immediately.

FOURTH LETTER.

"Paris, October 28th, 1864.

"Life is beautiful when illuminated by certain feelings. I have received the letter of announcement, addressed by you, dear madame—I recognise the hand. . . . You thought of the poor exile. . . . What angel shall reward you for the good you have done me!

"Yes, life is beautiful, but death would be more beautiful still! To be at your feet, my head in your lap, your hands in mine, and thus to die! . . .

"Hector Berlioz."

But the days succeeded each other, and I received no tidings. I found out at Lyons that Madame F—— had left for Geneva three weeks before. Did she mean to conceal the address which she had expressly promised to send me? which I did not want to know against her will? . . . Was I to have the grief of seeing her break her word? During those last anxious days, I came to believe, as I said above, that I should no longer have even the comfort of writing to her, and I felt utterly discouraged.

But one morning while sadly musing over my fire, they brought me a card, on which I read these words: "M. et Mdme. Charles F——." It was her son and daughter-in-law, whom she had charged to pay me a visit during their stay in Paris. What a delightful surprise! *She* had sent them! I was quite overwhelmed at finding him the living image of Mdlle. Estelle at eighteen. . . . The young wife appeared alarmed at my emotion; her husband seemed less surprised. They evidently knew all. Madame F—— had shown them my letters.

"Was she then so very beautiful?" exclaimed the young lady suddenly.

"Oh!" . . .

"Yes," interrupted her husband. "I remember once seeing my mother dressed for a ball, when I was five years old. It quite dazzled me, and I recollect it to this day."

At last I succeeded in mastering myself, and speaking more like a reasonable being to my two kind visitors. Madame Charles was a Dutch Creole from Java. She had lived at Sumatra and Borneo, knew the Malays, and had seen Rajah Brooke of Saráwak. How I should have catechised her if I had been in my usual frame of mind.

I had the pleasure of often seeing the young couple during their stay in Paris, and of procuring them some pleasant amusements. We often spoke of *her*, and when we grew so impulsively intimate the young wife even went so far as to scold me for writing to her mother-in-law.

"You frighten her," said she; "that is not the way you ought to write. You must remember that she scarcely knows you at all, and that you are both about the same age. I quite understand her tone when she shows me one of your letters and says: 'What answer do you expect me to make to that?' You must accustom yourself to be more calm; then your visits to Geneva will be delightful, and we shall be so pleased to do the honours of the town; for you *are* coming, we reckon on you."

"Oh, certainly; can you doubt it, since Madame F—— allows me?"

I tried accordingly to control myself, and when the young couple went off again, did not even send a letter by them to their mother.

However, as the second act of the *Troyens* was about to be performed at one of the Conservatoire concerts, I sent her a copy of the poem, marking a page with withered leaves, and begging her to read it on December 18th, at half-past two, when the performance was to take place at Paris. Madame Charles was to return to watch some business in which her husband was interested, and she was greatly delighted at the idea of attending this concert, the announcement of which had made some sensation in the musical world.

A fortnight passed without her return, and without any letter, and still I persisted in not writing. At last,

when I could bear it no longer, on the 17th she came back and brought me the following letter:

"Geneva, December 16th, 1864.

"MONSIEUR,

"I should have written much sooner, to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to my son and his wife, if I had not been constantly unwell, and for that reason very idle. However, I cannot let my daughter-in-law leave without expressing my gratitude for the pleasure you procured for them, which made their evenings so agreeable. Suzanne has promised to tell you all about our life at Geneva, where I, for my part, should be quite as happy as I was at Lyons, were it not for my regret at being separated from two of my sons, and from real friends who were fond of me, and whom in my turn I loved dearly. Thank you once more for the libretto of the *Trojans*, and for your delicate attention in sending me leaves from the Meylan trees, which recall my youth and all its pleasures.

"On Sunday my son and I will read your work, and take part in your success, and in Suzanne's pleasure at hearing your music.

"Believe me ever, yours affectionately,

"EST. F——."

This was my answer:

"Paris, Monday, December 19th, 1864.

"Last September, as I passed through Grenoble, I paid a visit to one of my cousins, who was living at St. Georges, a hamlet buried among the gloomy mountains on the left bank of the Drac, inhabited by a most miserable population. My cousin's sister-in-law devotes herself

to the alleviation of all this misery; she is the gracious Providence of the country. On the day I arrived at St. Georges she heard that a distant hovel had been destitute of bread for three weeks. She went off there immediately, and said to the mother:

"'How now, Jeanne, you are in want, and you never told me; and yet you know how willing we are to help you as much as possible.'

"'Oh, mademoiselle, we are not in want; we have still some potatoes and cabbages left. But the children will not eat them. They cry for bread. You know how unreasonable children are.'

"Well, madame! dear madame, you also did a good deed in writing to me. I had determined to be silent, and not weary you with my letters, and so I waited for your daughter-in-law's return for tidings of you. She delayed her coming, and I felt stifled, like a man who keeps his head under water and will not draw it out. People like me are *unreasonable*, you know.

"And yet, believe me, I know the truth only too well, and did not need the lesson which you have driven home with such cruel force. . . . No, I do not wish to give you the smallest annoyance; I will write as seldom as possible. You can answer or not, as you please. I will go and see you once a year, as though merely to pay a pleasant visit. You know what I feel, and you will be grateful to me for what I conceal.

"I fancy you are sad, and that makes me doubly. . . .

"But from this day forth I shall restrict myself to a certain mode of speaking, and to indifferent subjects.

"You have perhaps heard that the performance of my music did not take place yesterday at the Conservatoire. The committee tormented me in so many different ways,

asking now for the suppression of one piece, and then of another, that I was fairly exasperated; the singers were deprived of their chances of success, and were furious too; and I therefore withdrew the whole thing.

"Thank you for having so kindly transported yourself in thought to the concert-room at half-past two, and for your good wishes for my success.

"At the very time when I was thus harassed in Paris, they were keeping my birthday (December 11th) at Vienna, where a part of the *Damnation of Faust* was performed, and two hours later the conductor sent me the following telegram: 'A thousand good wishes for your birthday. Soldiers' and students' chorus performed at the Männergesang-Verein concert. Immense applause. Encored.' The cordiality of these German artists touched me far more than my success; and I am sure that you understand it. Kindness is a cardinal virtue.

"Two days afterwards, a Parisian stranger wrote me a most beautiful letter about the *Troyens*, which he characterised in terms that I dare not repeat. My son has just arrived at St. Nazaire, after a tedious voyage to Mexico, where he had an opportunity of distinguishing himself. He is now first lieutenant of the *Louisiana* first-rate. He tells me that he must leave again almost directly, and cannot possibly come to Paris. I must therefore go to him at St. Nazaire. He is a fine fellow, who has the misfortune to take after me in everything, and can never make up his mind to the platitudes and horrors of the world. We love each other like twins.

"This is all my news at present. My old mother-in-law, whom I have promised never to forsake, takes the greatest care of me, and never troubles me with questions as to the cause of my bad spirits. I read, or rather re-read

Shakespeare, Virgil, Homer, Paul and Virginia, books of travels, etc. I am utterly depressed; I suffer horribly from neuralgia, to which I have been a martyr for the last nine years, and which has entirely baffled all the doctors. In the evening, when my sufferings of body, heart, and spirit become too keen, I take some laudanum, and sleep after a fashion. If I am less suffering, and want the society of a few friends, I go and stay with friends in my neighbourhood — M. Damcke, a German composer of uncommon merit, a learned professor whose wife is an angel of goodness; both of them hearts of gold. According to my humour, we either make music or talk, or else they roll a great sofa to the fire, where I lie stretched the whole evening, brooding over my bitter thoughts. That is all, madame. I do not compose now, as I think I have told you. The state of the musical world of Paris, and of many other places, the way in which the arts are cultivated, artists favoured, masterpieces treated, makes me quite sick with indignation. That, at any rate, is a proof that I am not yet dead. . . . The day after to-morrow I hope to have the pleasure of escorting Madame Charles to the Théâtre Italien (she is charming in spite of her home-thrusts), with a Russian friend of hers. We are going to sit out the second representation of Donizetti's *Poliuto*—to the end, if possible. Madame Charton has given me a box.

"Farewell, madame! May you know nothing but sweet thoughts, repose of soul, and the happiness you must feel from the assured affection of your sons and of your friends. But give an occasional thought to poor children who are unreasonable.

"Your devoted servant,

"Hector Berlioz.

"P.S.—It was very generous of you to make the young couple come and see me. I was struck by the likeness of M. Charles to Mdlle. Estelle, and I forgot myself so far as to tell him so, although such compliments to a man are not quite proper."

Some time after receiving this letter, she wrote me one in which these words occurred: "Believe me, I have some pity for unreasonable children. I have always found that the best way to make them calm and reasonable was to amuse and give them pictures. I take the liberty of sending you one which will recall to you the reality of the present, and destroy the illusions of the past."

It was her portrait! Adorable creature! . . .

And here I end. I can live more peacefully now. I shall sometimes write to her; she will answer me. I shall go and see her. I know where she is, and I shall never be left in ignorance of the changes that may occur in her life; her son has promised to keep me informed of them. By degrees, in spite of her dread of new friendships, she may perhaps find her affectionate feelings towards me growing stronger. Already I am sensible of a change for the better in my life. The past is not wholly past. My sky is not without its star, and with moistened eyes I watch it beaming on me from afar. True, she does not love me; why, indeed, should she? But she might have remained in total ignorance of me, and now she knows that I adore her.

I must try to console myself for not having known her sooner, as I console myself for not having known Virgil, whom I should have loved so well, or Gluck or Beethoven

. . . or Shakespeare, who perhaps might have loved me. (Nevertheless, I am really inconsolable.)

Which of the two powers, Love or Music, can elevate man to the sublimest heights? . . . It is a great problem, and yet it seems to me that this is the answer: "Love can give no idea of music; music can give an idea of love." . . . Why separate them? They are the two wings of the soul.

When I see the way in which certain people look on love, and what they seek in artistic creation, I am involuntarily reminded of hogs, rooting and grunting for truffles amongst the loveliest flowers, or under the grandest trees.

But I must try to think no more of art. . . . Stella! Stella! I can now die without anger or bitterness.

January 1*st*, 1865.

FINIS.

Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more : it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

SHAKESPEARE (*Macbeth*).

N.B.—M. Berlioz died, four years after the date on the preceding page, on March 9, 1869.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS OF M. BERLIOZ, MUSICAL AND LITERARY.

I. Musical Works.

Op. 1. Ouverture de "Waverley."

Op. 2. Irlande; 9 mélodies pour une et deux voix sur des traductions de Thomas Moore.

Op. 3. Ouverture des "Francs Juges."

Op. 4. Ouverture du "Roi Lear."

Op. 5. "Grande Messe des Morts" (Requiem).

Op. 6. "Le 5 Mai." Chant sur la mort de l'empereur Napoléon, pour voix de basse avec chœurs et orchestre.

Op. 7. "Les nuits d'été." Six mélodies pour une voix avec orchestre ou piano.

Op. 8. "Rêverie et caprice." Romance pour le violon avec orchestre ou piano.

Op. 9. Le Carnaval Romain, Ouverture caracteristique.

Op. 10. Grand Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes. Avec supplément, "Le chef d'orchestre."

Op. 11. "Sara la Baigneuse." Ballade à trois chœurs avec orchestre.

Op. 12. "La Captive." Rêverie pour mezzo soprano avec orchestre.

Op. 13. "Fleurs des Landes." Cinq mélodies pour une voix avec piano.

Op. 14. "Épisode de la vie d'un artiste." Symphonie fantastique en cinq parties.

Op. 14 bis. "Lelio, ou Le retour à la Vie." Monodrame lyrique, 2e partie de l'épisode.

Op. 15. Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale pour grande harmonie militaire, avec un orchestre d'instruments à cordes et un chœur ad libitum.

Op. 16. "Harold en Italie." Symphonie en 4 parties, avec un *alto* principal.

Op. 17. "Roméo et Juliette." Symphonie dramatique avec chœurs, solos de chant, et prologue en récitatif choral.

Op. 18. "Tristia." 3 Chœurs avec orchestre. ("Méditation religieuse, Ballade sur la Mort d'Ophélie, Marche funèbre.")

Op. 19. "Feuillets d'Album." 3 morceaux de chant avec piano.

Op. 20. "Vox populi." Deux grands chœurs avec orchestre. (La menace des Francs, Hymne à la France.)

Op. 21. Ouverture du "Corsaire."

Op. 22. "Te Deum," à trois chœurs avec orchestre et orgue concertants.

Op. 23. "Benvenuto Cellini." Opéra en trois actes. Paroles de Léon de Wailly et August Barbier. (Partition de piano. Paris, Choudens.)

Op. 24. "La Damnation de Faust." Légende dramatique en quatre parties.

Op. 25. "L'Enfance du Christ." Trilogie Sacrée. 1. "Le songe d'Hérode." 2. "La fuite en Égypte." 3. "L'arrivée à Sais."

Op. 26. "L'Impériale," cantate à deux chœurs et orchestre.

"Le Temple universel." Chœur à quatre voix et piano.

"Prière du Matin." Chœur à deux voix et piano.

"La belle Isabeau." Conte pendant l'orage, avec chœur.

"Le Chasseur danois." Pour voix de basse avec piano.

"L'Invitation à la valse de Weber." Orchestration.

"Marche Marocaine" de L. de Meyer. Orchestration.

"Récitatives" pour "le Freischütz."

"Béatrice et Bénédict." Opéra en deux actes imité de Shakespeare. Paroles de Hector Berlioz. (Partition de piano. Paris, Brandus.)

"Les Troyens." Poème lyrique en deux parties: (1) "La prise de Troie." (MS.) (2) "Les Troyens à Carthage." (Partition de piano. Paris, Choudens.)

N.B.—The Songs have been collected and published under the following title: "33 Mélodies pour chant et Piano, à une ou plusieurs voix et chœur, par Hector Berlioz. Prix 15 francs. Paris, Richault."

II. Literary Works.

Voyage Musical . . . études sur Beethoven, Gluck et Weber, 2 vols. Paris, 1884.

Les Soirées de l'Orchestre, 1853.

Les Grotesques de la Musique; 1859.

À travers chants; 1862.

Mémoires, comprenant ses voyages, etc., 1803–1865. Portrait. Paris, 1870. (Of this work the present volumes are a translation.)

Historiettes et Scènes musicales, and Les Musiciens et la Musique, were advertised by M. Levy frères in 1872, but are not yet published.

CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS, CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

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